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ZEROZAKI SOUSHIKI NO NINGEN SHIKEN

by NisiOisiN and SHIOMIYA Iruka

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Zerozaki Soushiki no Ningen Shiken v2 c4

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AFTERNOON KC

原作 西尾維新
漫画 シオミヤイルカ
キャラクター原案 竹

零崎双識の人間試験 2

ゼロザキソウシキ

零崎双識の人間試験

零崎双識の人間試験

2

原作 西尾維新
（講談社ノベルス「零崎双識の人間試験」より）
漫画 シオミヤイルカ
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QUESTION 4

.....
AH HAH
THE..
THE SCISSORS.. SPLIT APART?

I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST AN ORDINARY PIECE OF STATIONERY,
BUT IT'S STARTING TO LOOK AN ACTUAL WEAPON NOW.
UNFORTU-NATELY,
a Sawarabi's blade is not so light as to be stopped single-handedly.

I...
I DON'T REALLY GET IT, BUT-
ISN'T THIS WHAT THEY CALL, TURNING THE TABLES..?
KNIVES AND ALL,

I SHALL CUT YOU IN TWO WITH A SINGLE STROKE.
FUFU.
.....
BE CAREFUL WITH WHAT YOU SAY AND DO, NAGUMA-KUN.
?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WHAT I MEAN, IS THAT THE EXAM HAS ALREADY BEGUN.
.....
HERE I WAS WONDERING WHAT YOU WOULD SAY.
AN EXAM, IS IT?

YOU, A HOMICIDAL MONSTER,
OR IF I WERE TO BORROW MY OLDER BROTHER'S WORDS,
"THE MOST EVIL EXISTENCE THERE IS".
Say you will test man?
"THE MOST EVIL", HUH?
THAT'S QUITE INSIGHTFUL.

SO, NAGUMA-KUN,
"Evil"
-TO BEGIN WITH, WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT IS?
I SAY,
WHEN A PERSON DIES, WITHOUT A DOUBT, YOU WILL FIND SOME SORT OF "EVIL" THERE.
THAT'S WHAT I BELIEVE.
IN OTHER WORDS, "EVIL" IS A CONCEPT WHICH KILLS PEOPLE.
THAT EXISTENCE KILLS PEOPLE
EVIL...

HMPH
IF THAT'S YOUR DEFINITION OF "EVIL",

WOULDN'T THE HOMICIDAL MONSTERS, THE ZEROZAKI, BE THE VERY DEFINITION OF "EVIL"?
You are right.
.....
AND I'M AM THE EVILEST EXISTENCE OF THE ZEROZAKI
AND BECAUSE I AM THE "EVILEST" EXISTENCE-

I believe in man's potential.
And question it in others.
POTEN-TIAL...
THAT MEANS TO POSSESS AN INFINITE NUMBER OF CHOICES.

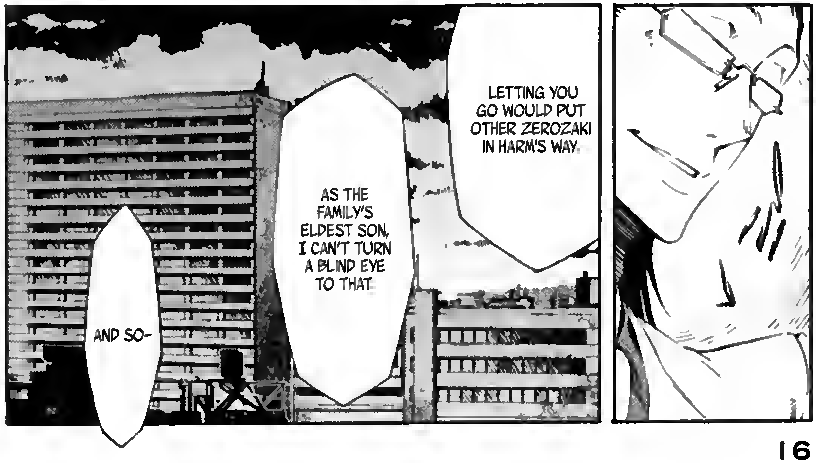
ONE IS ABLE TO MAKE ANY CHOICE OF ONE'S OWN FREE WILL.
THEY CAN BECOME ANYONE THEY WANT TO.
THAT IS A MOST WONDERFUL THING.
Despite being born a hitman, you swing your blade over a personal grudge.
Despite being born a homicidal monster, you can live without killing.
Wouldn't you say, that within an infinite number of choices,
These are but one of the "possibilities" for each of you?

And I, a being capable of living only as a homicidal monster...
Am extremely envious of that.

POSSIBILITIES ...

MIND RENDER-SAN
YOUR REASONING IS ALL OVER THE PLACE. I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT AT ALL.

FOR STARTERS, IF I PASS WHAT YOU CALL AN EXAM,
WILL YOU STAY PUT AND LET ME KILL YOU?


LETTING YOU GO WOULD PUT OTHER ZEROZAKI IN HARM'S WAY.
AS THE FAMILY'S ELDEST SON, I CAN'T TURN A BLIND EYE TO THAT.
AND SO-

I'LL HAVE YOU DIE HERE BY MY HANDS
LOOK, NAGUMA-KUN,
.....
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO GO AGAINST MY NAGINATA WITH A WEAPON LIKE THAT.
IT SEEMS YOU'RE BRIMMING WITH CONFIDENCE.

WHETHER YOUR SLASH COMES FROM THE LEFT OR THE RIGHT,
I'LL STOP IT WITH ONE HAND--
AND HAVE THE OTHER GO FOR YOUR THROAT...
I'LL THROW THIS,
YOU'LL BE DONE FOR,
AND THAT WILL BE THE END OF IT.

S TO KILL
JUST NOW, YOU SAID I CAN'T STOP YOU SINGLE-HANDEDLY,
BUT IT'S NOT ABOUT WHETHER I CAN OR CAN'T.
I will do it.
Once a Zerozaki starts, all that's left,

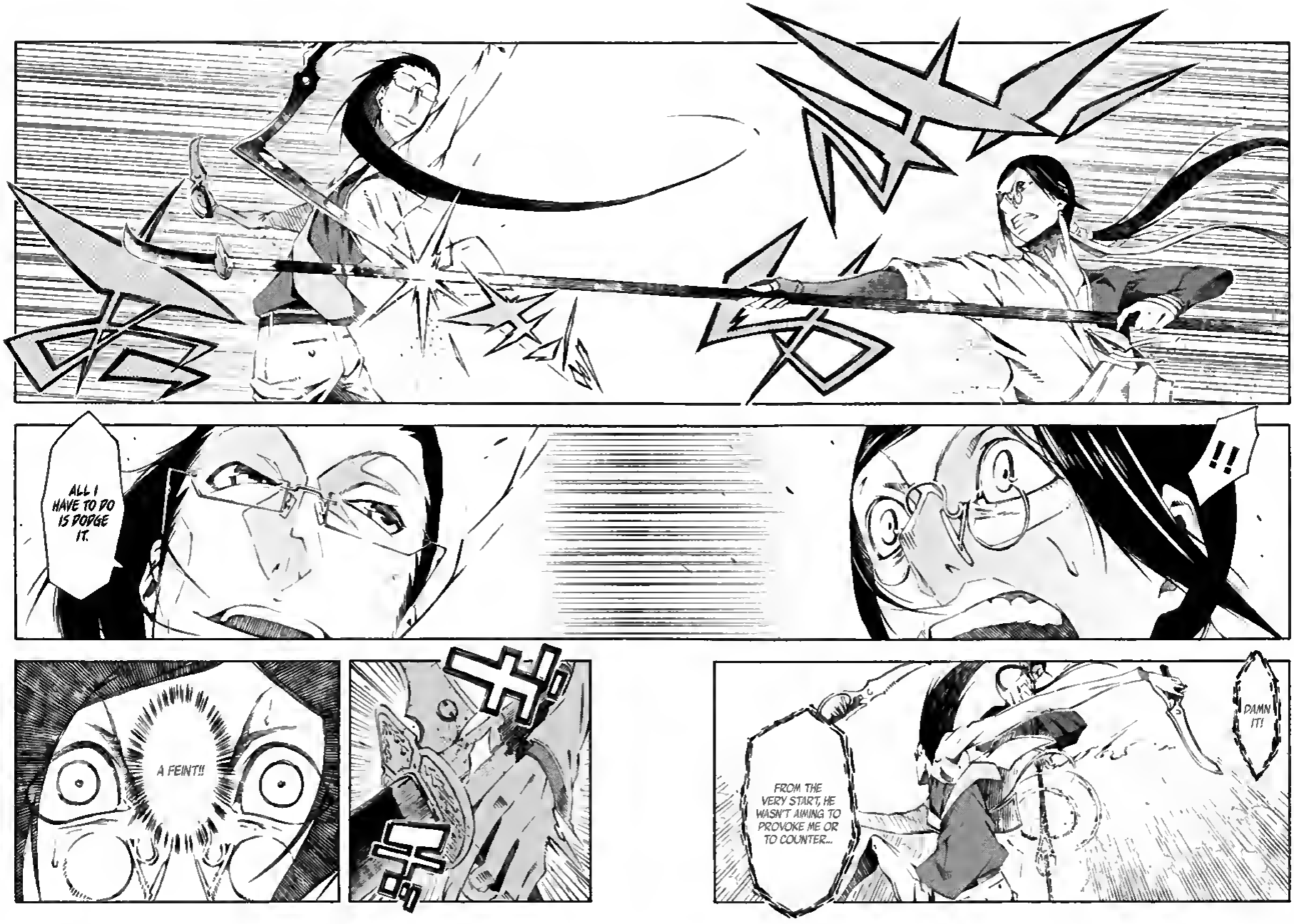
I'M SURE YOU'RE SICK OF ALL THIS TALK BY NOW.
SO THEN, SAWARABI NAGUMA-KUN,
LET'S BEGIN THE DEATH MATCH.

SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH ME...
.....
EVEN THOUGH A DEATH MATCH A STARTING RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME,
THIS WHOLE TIME...
I'VE BEEN GETTING,
EXCITED

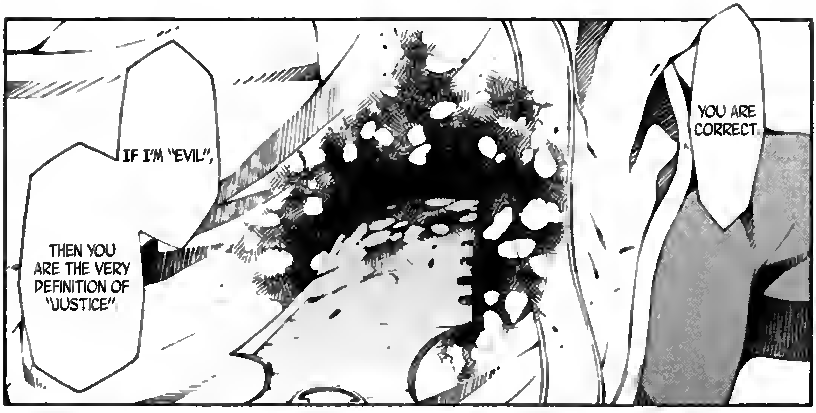
HE'S JUST PROVOKING ME.
.....
THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN STOP ME...
I WILL KILL MIND RENDER, HERE AND NOW
THIS WILL BE THE BEACON OF MY REVENGE!

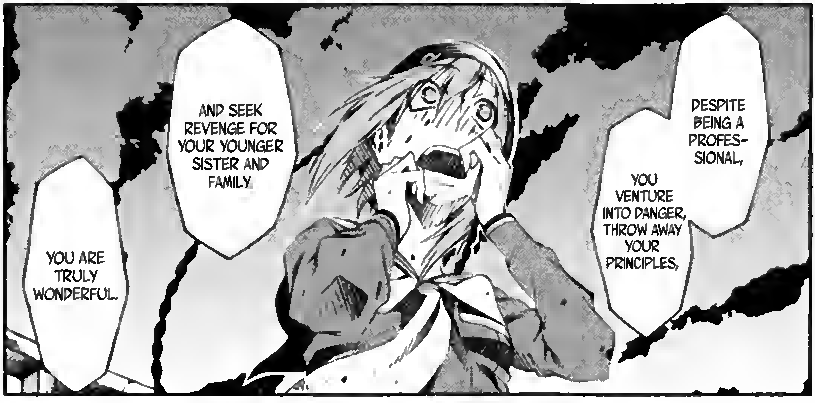
UH

UH.
GUH.
.....
AHHH!!
THEN,
A thrust, is it?


ALL I HAVE TO DO IS DODGE IT.
!!
A FEINT!!
FROM THE VERY START, HE WASN'T AIMING TO PROVOKE ME OR TO COUNTER...
DAMN IT!

Sawarabi Nagumakun.
You pass.


IF I'M "EVIL",
THEN YOU ARE THE VERY DEFINITION OF "JUSTICE".
YOU ARE CORRECT.

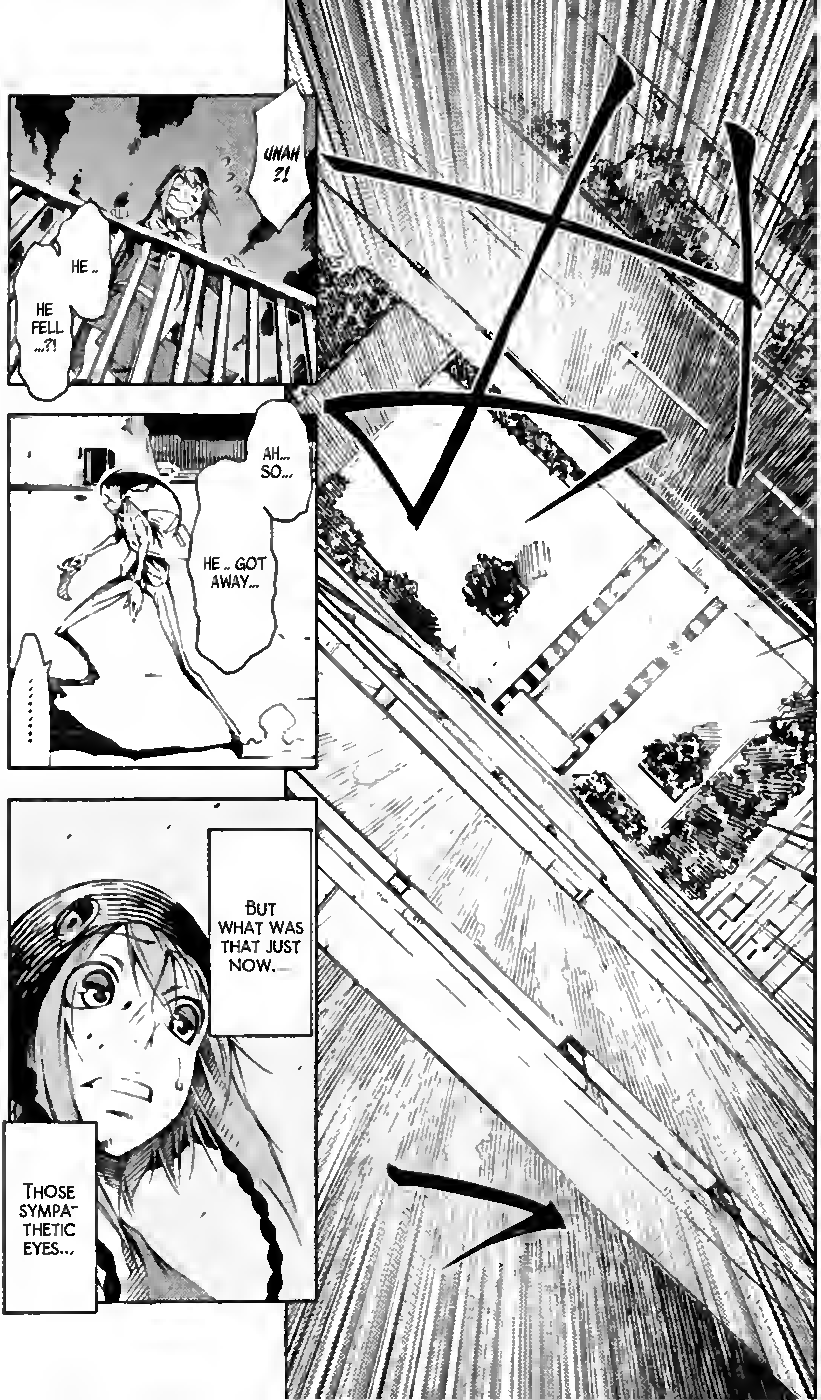

AND SEEK REVENGE FOR YOUR YOUNGER SISTER AND FAMILY.
YOU ARE TRULY WONDERFUL.
DESPITE BEING A PROFES-SIONAL,
YOU VENTURE INTO DANGER, THROW AWAY YOUR PRINCIPLES,

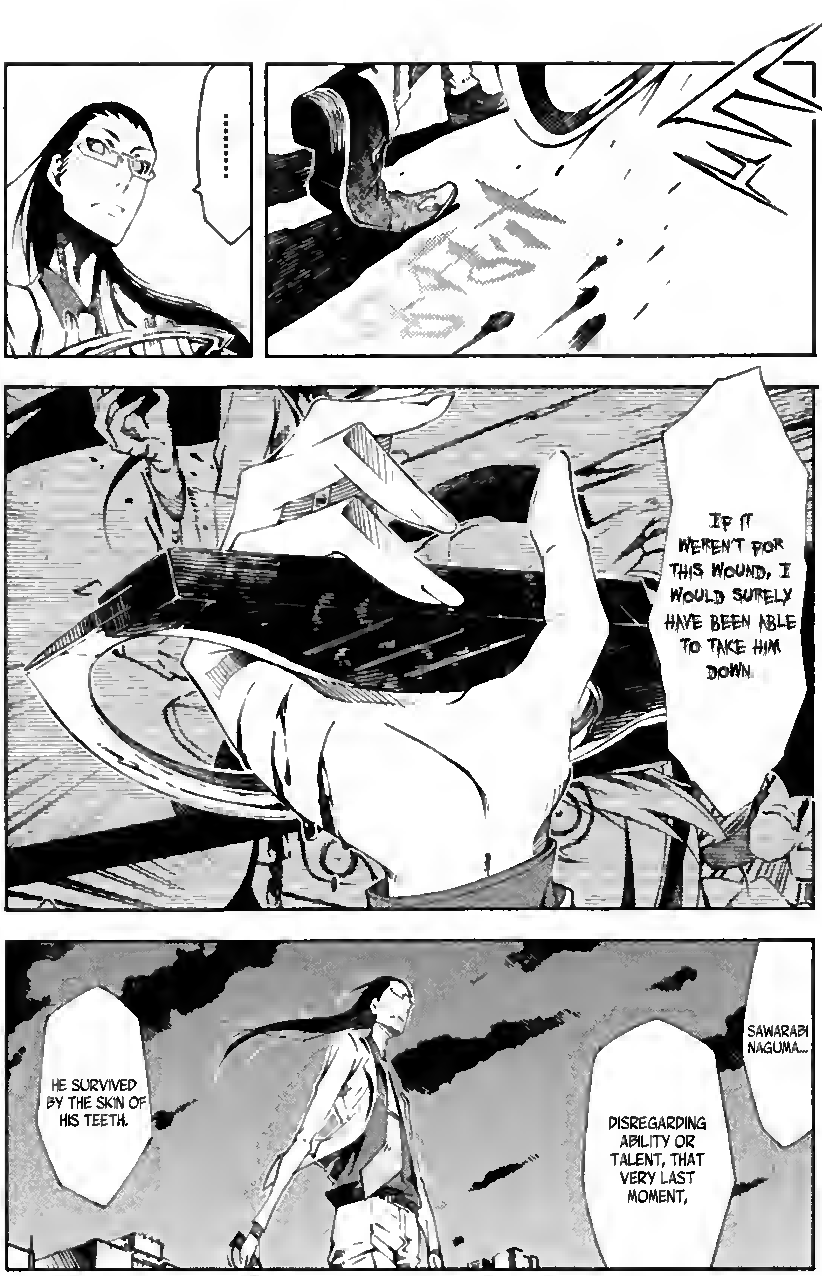
I WILL KILL YOU HERE, AND YOU-
WHILE EMBRACING THAT RIGHTEOUS-NESS,

WILL DIE!!

!?
UH!

UNAH?
EH... WAIT!
PLEASE DON'T COME THIS WAY!


UNAH ?!
HE ..
HE FELL ...?!
AH... SO...
HE .. GOT AWAY...
BUT WHAT WAS THAT JUST NOW...
THOSE SYMPA-THETIC EYES...


.....
IF IT WEREN'T FOR THIS WOUND, I WOULD SURELY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TAKE HIM DOWN.
SAWARABI NAGUMA...
DISREGARDING ABILITY OR TALENT, THAT VERY LAST MOMENT,
HE SURVIVED BY THE SKIN OF HIS TEETH.

A BERSERKER
IS WHAT YOU COULD CALL HIM...
IT WAS A MISTAKE NOT FINISHING HIM OFF IN THAT FIGHT...
AT THIS POINT, THERE ARE 3 THINGS TO BE DONE

Complete annihilation of the Sawarabi and all their collaborators.
And ensuring Iori-chan's safety during that time.
Searching for my little brother and confirm the truth.
.....
MY, MY
BEING THE ELDEST SON ISN'T VERY FUN, IS IT?

QUESTION 4 END

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QUESTION 5
HOW.
SHOULD I EVALUATE YOU ALL?

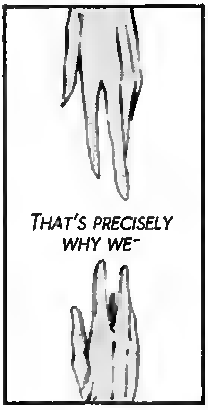
HAA...

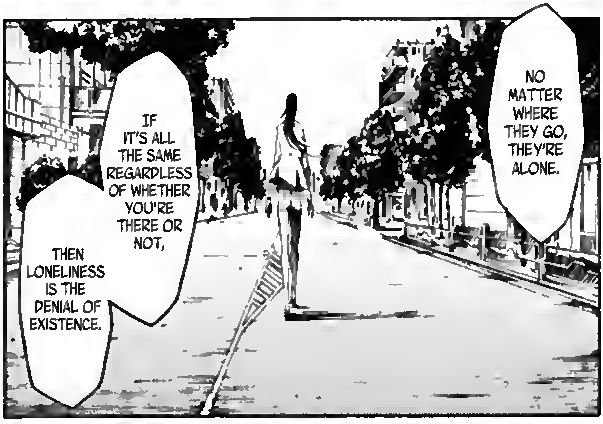
I DECIDED TO FACE THIS HEAD ON AND NOT RUN, BUT-
WHAT DO I DO NOW..?
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
HOW ARE YOU FEELING, IORI-CHAN?
DID YOU CALM DOWN?
YES, UMM...
THANKS FOR ASKING..

UH... UMM,
SOUSHIKI ...-SAN...
NO, THANK YOU.
I REALLY WOULDN'T MIND IF YOU CALLED ME "ONII-CHAN".
UMM... THAT IS,
WHY DID YOU HELP ME, AND INVITE ME TO JOIN YOUR FAMILY...?
IS IT BECAUSE I HAVE THE TALENT... THE *DISPOSITION* TO KILL...?

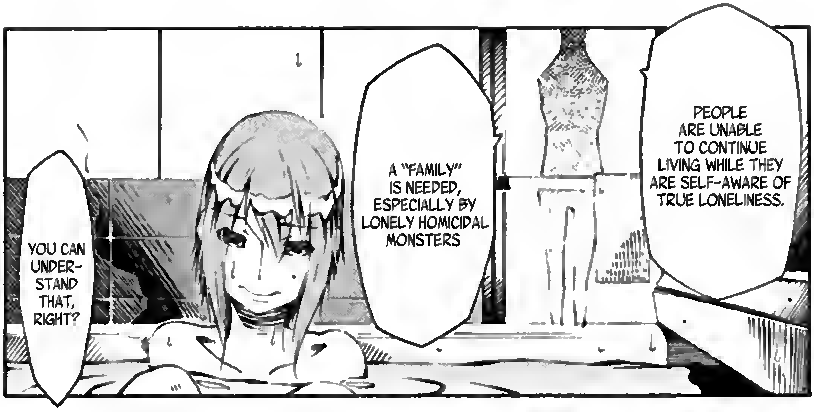
WHY,
DID A HOMICIDAL MONSTER CREATE A FAMILY?
EH?
Lone-liness.
.....
THE EXISTENCE OF A "HOMICIDAL MONSTER",
Is originally one of loneliness.

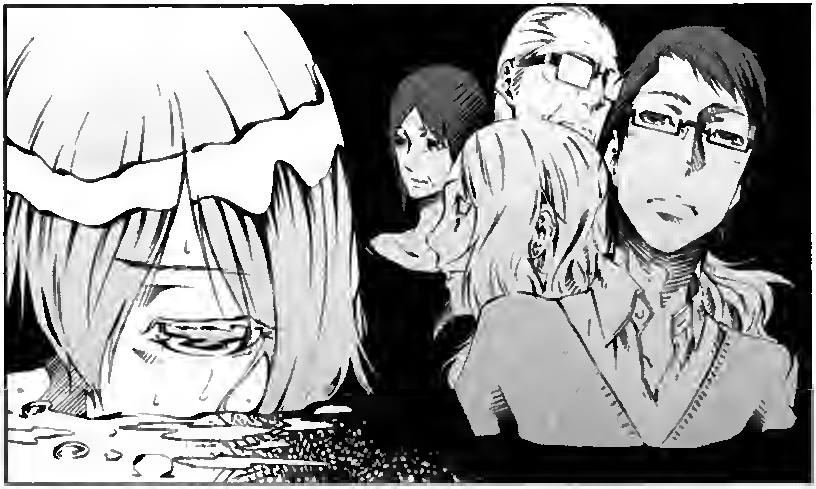
HOMICIDAL MONSTERS,
THEY CAN'T HAVE FRIENDS, PALS OR EVEN LOVERS.
THEY HAVE NO RIVALS,
OR MENTORS, OR EVEN SYMPATHIZERS.

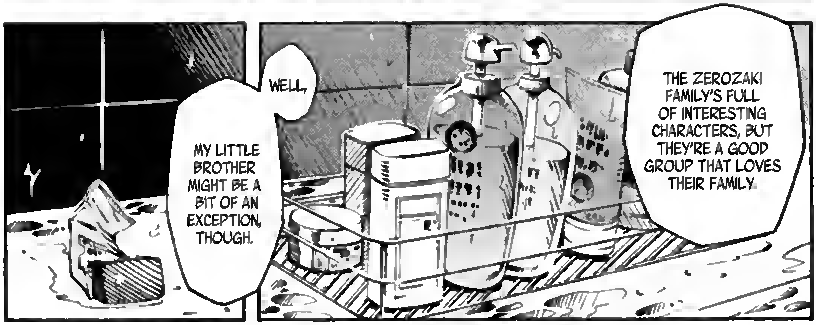

THAT'S PRECISELY WHY WE-


NO MATTER WHERE THEY GO, THEY'RE ALONE.
IF IT'S ALL THE SAME REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU'RE THERE OR NOT,
THEN LONELINESS IS THE DENIAL OF EXISTENCE.

Sought after something to protect in this world of loneliness.
Is the origin of the group of homicidal monsters, the Zerozaki family.
FOR US HOMICIDAL MONSTERS, THAT SOMETHING WAS "FAMILY".
THAT-


PEOPLE ARE UNABLE TO CONTINUE LIVING WHILE THEY ARE SELF-AWARE OF TRUE LONELINESS.
A "FAMILY" IS NEEDED, ESPECIALLY BY LONELY HOMICIDAL MONSTERS
YOU CAN UNDER-STAND THAT, RIGHT?




THE ZEROZAKI FAMILY'S FULL OF INTERESTING CHARACTERS, BUT THEY'RE A GOOD GROUP THAT LOVES THEIR FAMILY.
WELL,
MY LITTLE BROTHER MIGHT BE A BIT OF AN EXCEPTION, THOUGH.

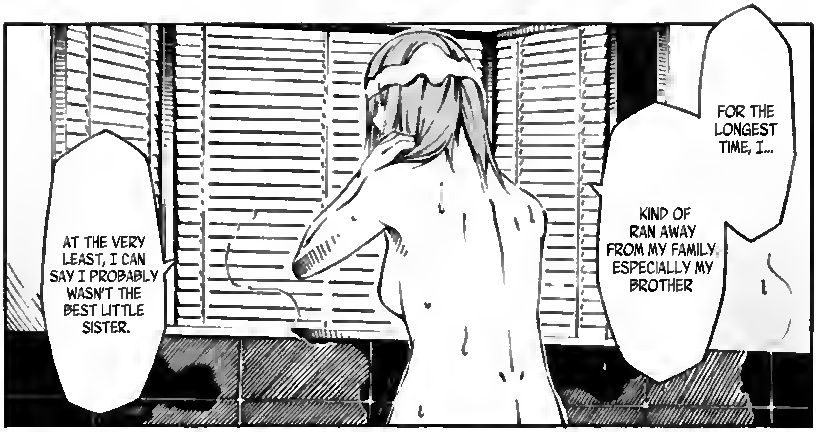
BY...
LITTLE BROTHER,
DO YOU MEAN THAT PERSON WITH THE TATTOOED FACE..?
THAT IS THE ONE.
HE'S A GUY INFECTED BY WANDERLUST, SO I HAVE MY HANDS FULL WITH HIM TOO.
TRUTH IS, I ORIGINALLY CAME HERE LOOKING FOR MY LITTLE BROTHER...
RIGHT, IORI-CHAN,
HAVE YOU SEEN OR MET MY LITTLE BROTHER ANYWHERE?
EH?
A TATTOO ON THE FACE...?
DOES HE HAVE ANY OTHER CHARACTE-RISTICS?
LET'S SEE.
CHA-RACTE-RISTICS ...?

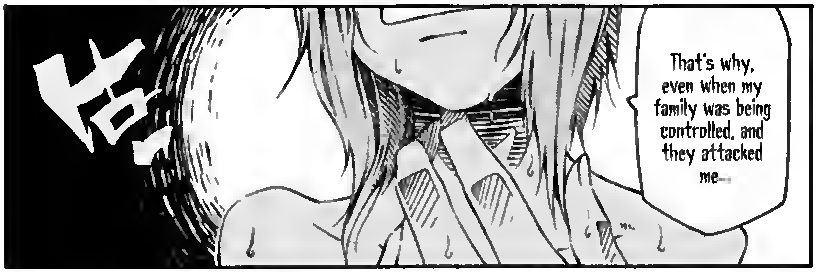
He's about 150 cm tall.
Has dyed hair, tied up in the back.
With cellphone straps instead of earrings on his ears.
He might be wearing sunglasses.
But he has knives all over his body.
And I don't know if he's trying to be trendy.

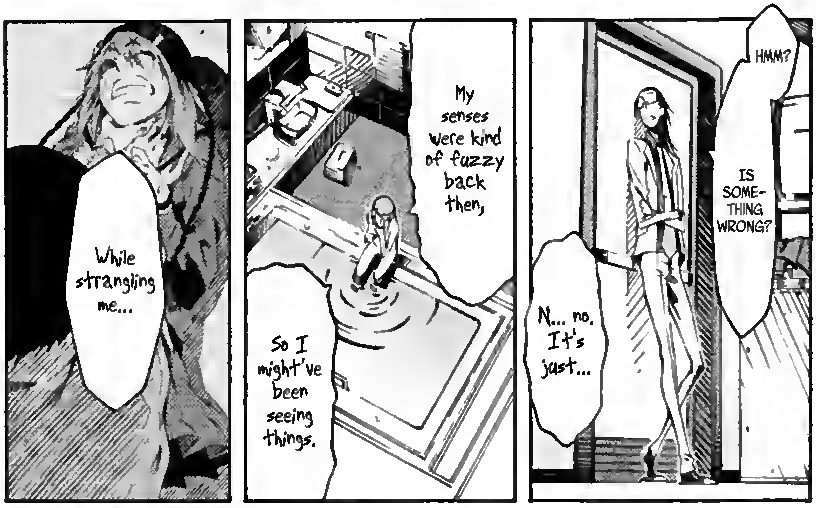
If I saw a person like that, I would've run away at full speed...
Ufu fu.
THAT'S GOOD
Without a doubt, if you met him now, your homicidal urges would develop much quicker.
?
DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?
NO, JUST TALKING TO MYSELF
I SEE.
SO, SOUSHIKI-SAN...

WHAT BUSINESS DID YOU HAVE WITH THAT LITTLE BROTHER OF YOURS?
EH?
EH?
WHAT A FUNNY THING TO ASK, IORI-CHAN
UEH?
DID I SAY SOMETHING FUNNY?
Do you need a reason to meet with family?

I'M... NOT SURE... I DON'T KNOW...
MY FAMILY AND I WEREN'T ALL THAT CLOSE, SO...
ESPECIALLY WITH MY OLDER BROTHER. I DIDN'T TALK TO HIM UNLESS I HAD TO.
AND BEING THAT WAY, MY BROTHER WOULD TELL ME, DON'T RUN AWAY
But I hated that, and we fought a lot because of it


FOR THE LONGEST TIME, I...
KIND OF RAN AWAY FROM MY FAMILY, ESPECIALLY MY BROTHER
AT THE VERY LEAST, I CAN SAY I PROBABLY WASN'T THE BEST LITTLE SISTER.

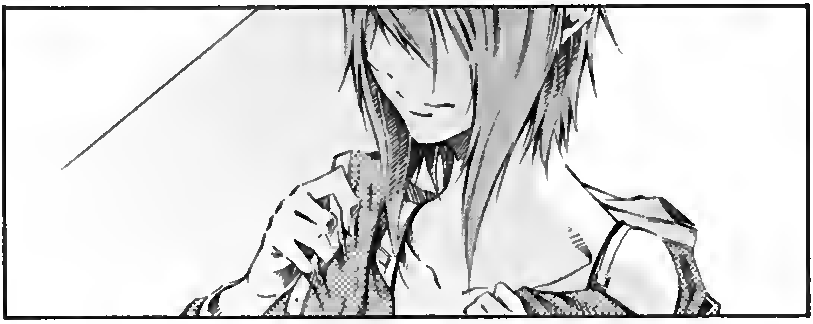

That's why, even when my family was being controlled, and they attacked me—


While strangling me...
So I might've been seeing things.
My senses were kind of fuzzy back then,
N... no. It's just...
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
HMM?

He was...
crying.

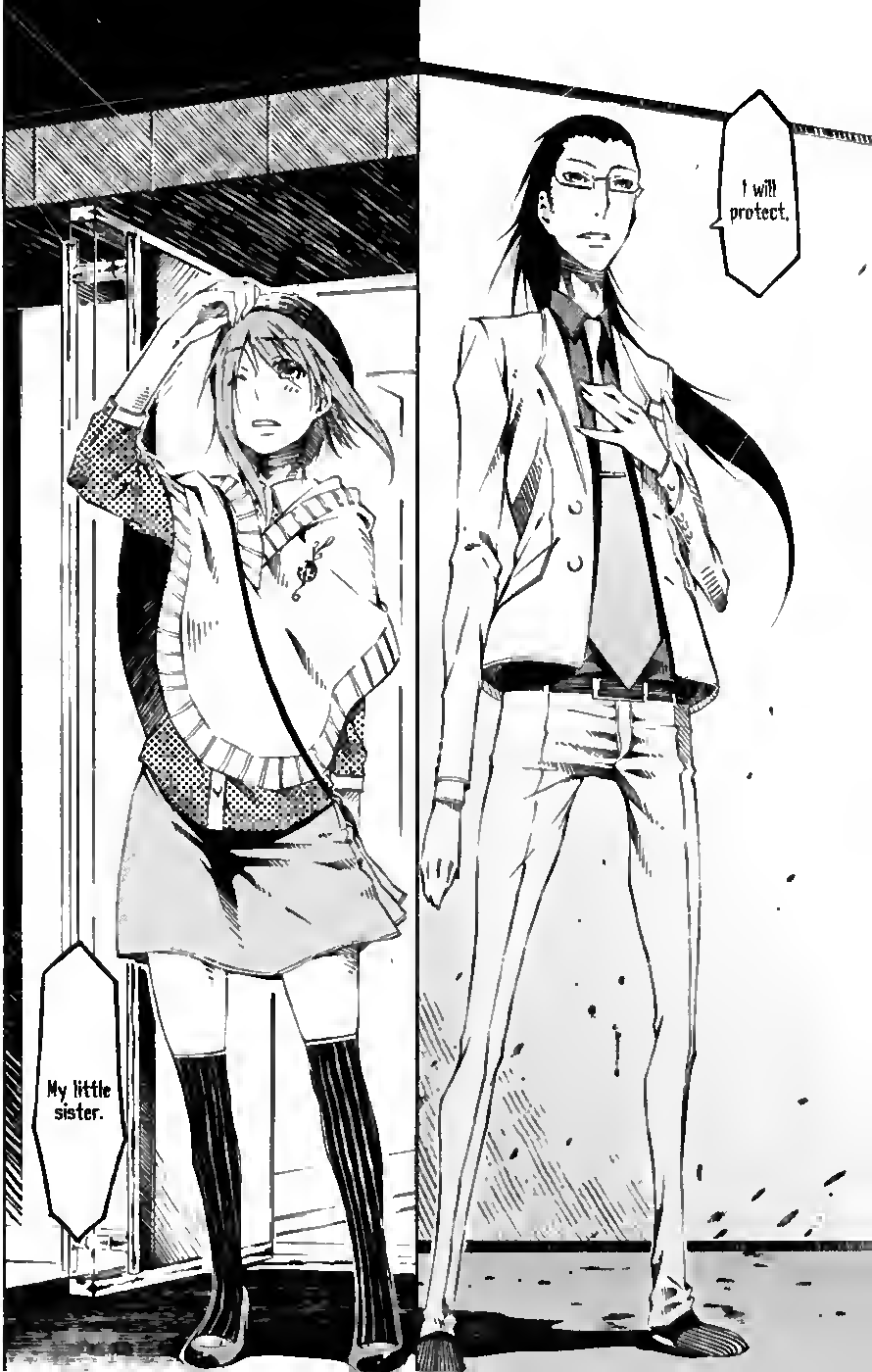
AH, NO, BUT REALLY, THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MY MISTAKE.
IORI-CHAN,
AH, YES.
THERE'S ONE THING I'M SURE OF FROM WHAT YOU'VE JUST TOLD ME
WH... WHAT IS IT...?
Wearing tights under skirts really is blasphemy.
ひろーん

WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU LISTENING TO THIS WHOLE TIME!!
OH, RIGHT,
THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO TAKE CARE OF,
SO WHEN YOU'RE READY, GO AHEAD AND WAIT FOR ME OUTSIDE
MAYBE THAT GUY..
REALLY IS JUST SOME PERVERT..

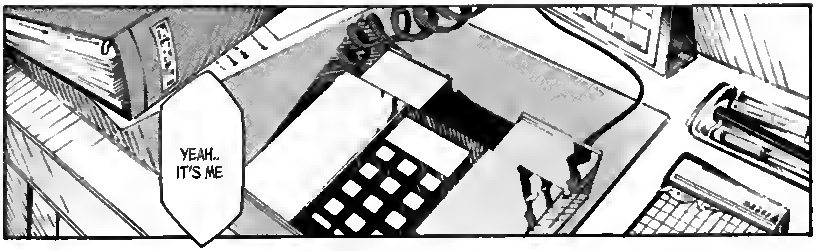


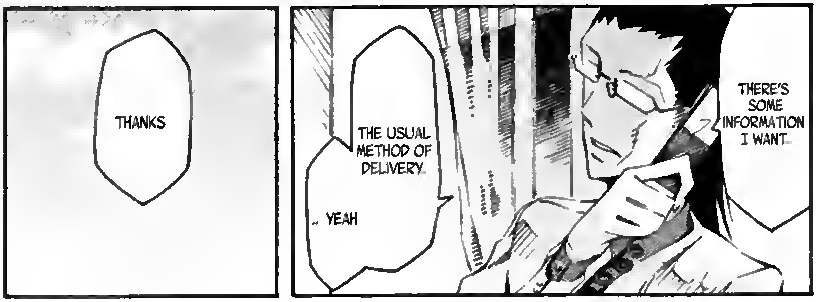
IORI-CHAN'S FATHER, MOTHER, SISTER, AND BROTHER
I RESPECT YOU ALL.
I'M SURE IT WAS BECAUSE SHE SPENT HER DAYS SURROUNDED BY FAMILY LIKE YOU,
THAT HER MURDEROUS INTENT DIDN'T MANIFEST ITSELF FOR 17 YEARS,
LETTING HER LEAD A WHOLESOME LIFE.

There is no doubt, that all of you.
Pass with full points.
Thank you for protectin her until now.
From here on-


I will protect.
My little sister.

SO BRIGHT
UNAH..
BUT...
IT'S KIND OF LIKE A BLESSING FOR THE START OF IORI-CHAN'S NEW LIFE
You're a member of the Zerozaki family, aren't you?

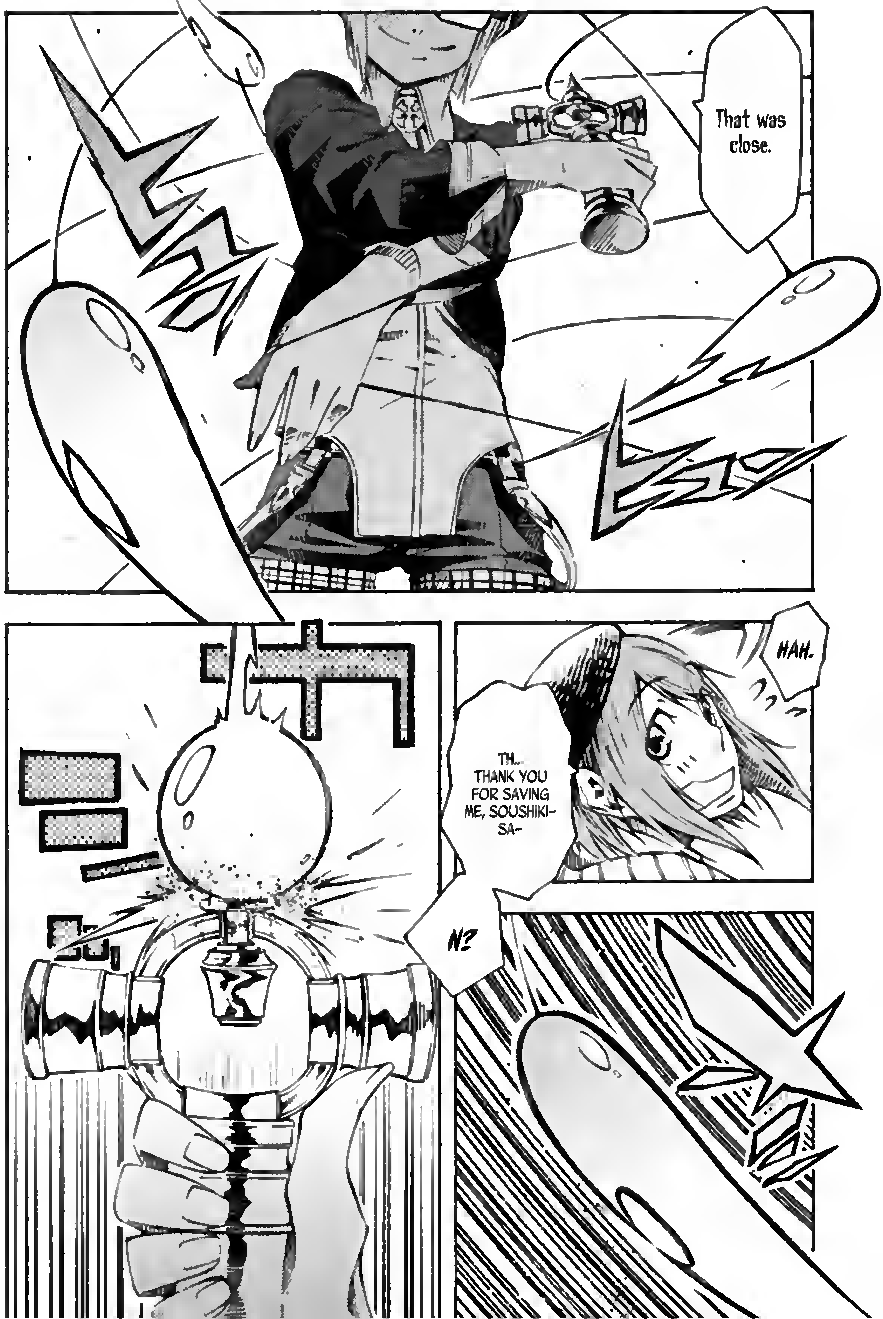

YEAH..
IT'S ME

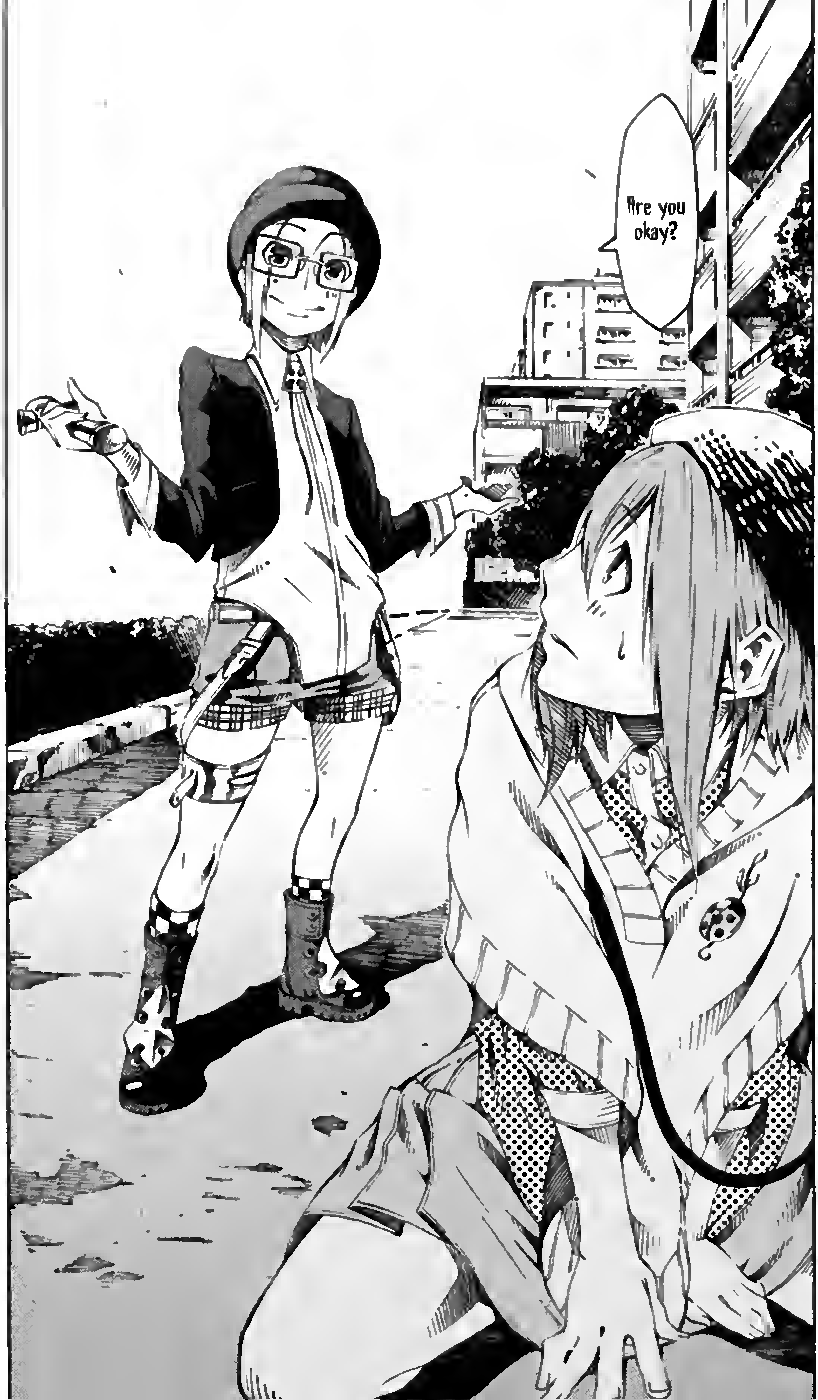

THANKS
THE USUAL METHOD OF DELIVERY..
.. YEAH
THERE'S SOME INFORMATION I WANT..

HAH.
HA WAH.
WAH.
WHOA.
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE A SURVIVOR FROM YESTERDAY OR WHAT,
BUT I'M NOT THE SAME IORI-CHAN THAT I WAS UNTIL THE DAY BEFORE...
WHAT'S WITH THIS DEJA VU...?

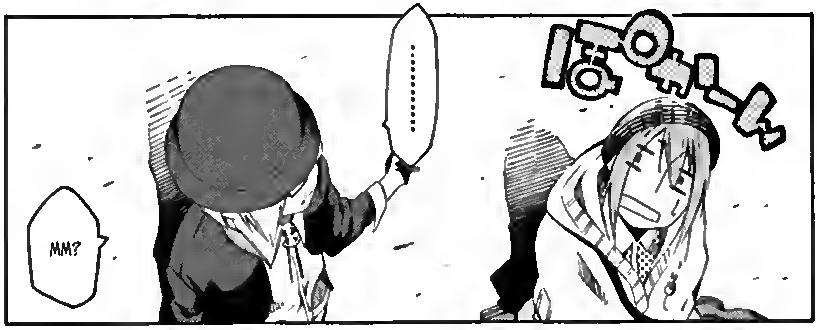
WITH MY HIDDEN HOMICIDAL MONSTER POWERS(?),
I CAN'T!
UNAH?!

KUOOHHHH
Ah...
Oh no...


That was close.
HAH.
TH..
THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME, SOUSHIKI-SA-
N?

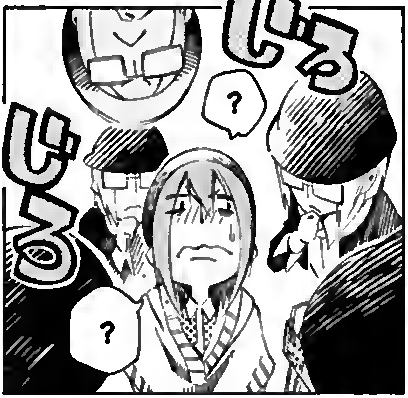

Are you okay?

THAT'S NOT COOL.
MAN,
SO PUPPETS GET NORMAL PEOPLE INVOLVED, TOO..?


.....
MM?

HMM?
.....
OH, YOU'RE...
WH.. WHAT IS IT..?

I'M HANAMAKI KOJIKA
ONEE-SAN-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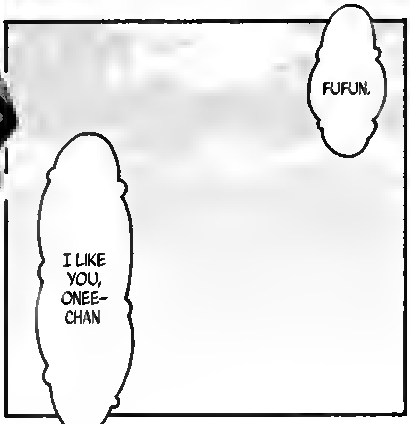
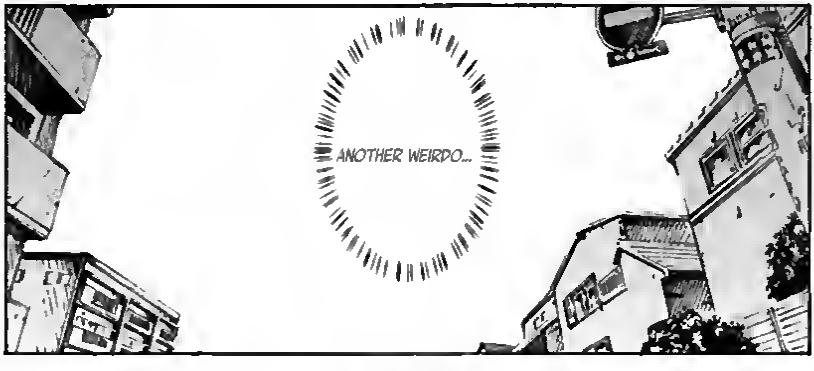

FUFUN.
I LIKE YOU, ONEE-CHAN

Be my bride.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by NisiOisiN and SHIOMIYA Iruka

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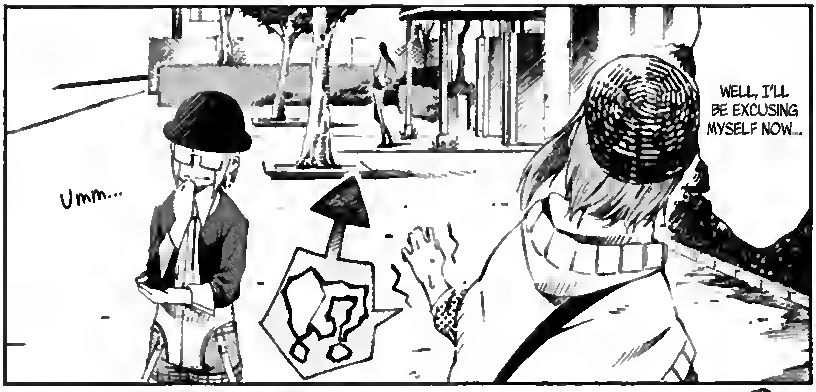
QUESTION 6
IT REALLY IS BOTHERSOME TO ASK FOR HELP...
PUT I GUESS THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE THIS TIME AROUND
Rather than killing her right away, I think I'll find a more useful role for her...
THAT GIRL IS A ZEROZAKI
..NO,
She's becoming a Zerozaki Now that I know that.

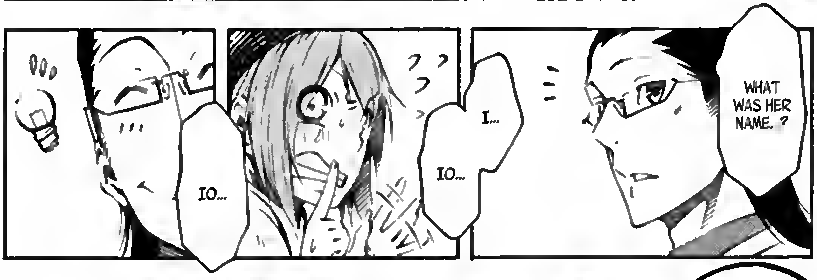
A role befitting one who's currently likely to be the weakest Zerozaki.

……
WHAT'S WITH THIS SITUATION?!

UH..
UMM...
THIS KID KNEW ABOUT THE PUPPETS, WHICH MEANS HE'S INVOLVED.. RIGHT...?
WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU DOING HERE, KOJIKA-KUN...?
EH?!
ACTUALLY, I'M..
DID YOU FALL FOR ME ALREADY ?!
What do I do?
DON'T TELL ME, ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ME?!

!?
A kidnapper.
That's my job
JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME, THERE'S THIS FAMOUS FAMILY IN THE UNDERWORLD CALLED THE ZEROZAKI.
AND MY CURRENT JOB IS TO KIDNAP THEIR LITTLE SISTER
!!!
GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR WORK!
I...
THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME!
AH,
H... HEE~ IS THAT RIGHT?!
AND I THINK HER NAME WAS I... I-
CHARACTERISTICS ARE A SAILOR UNIFORM, BEANIE,


Umm...
WELL, I'LL BE EXCUSING MYSELF NOW...

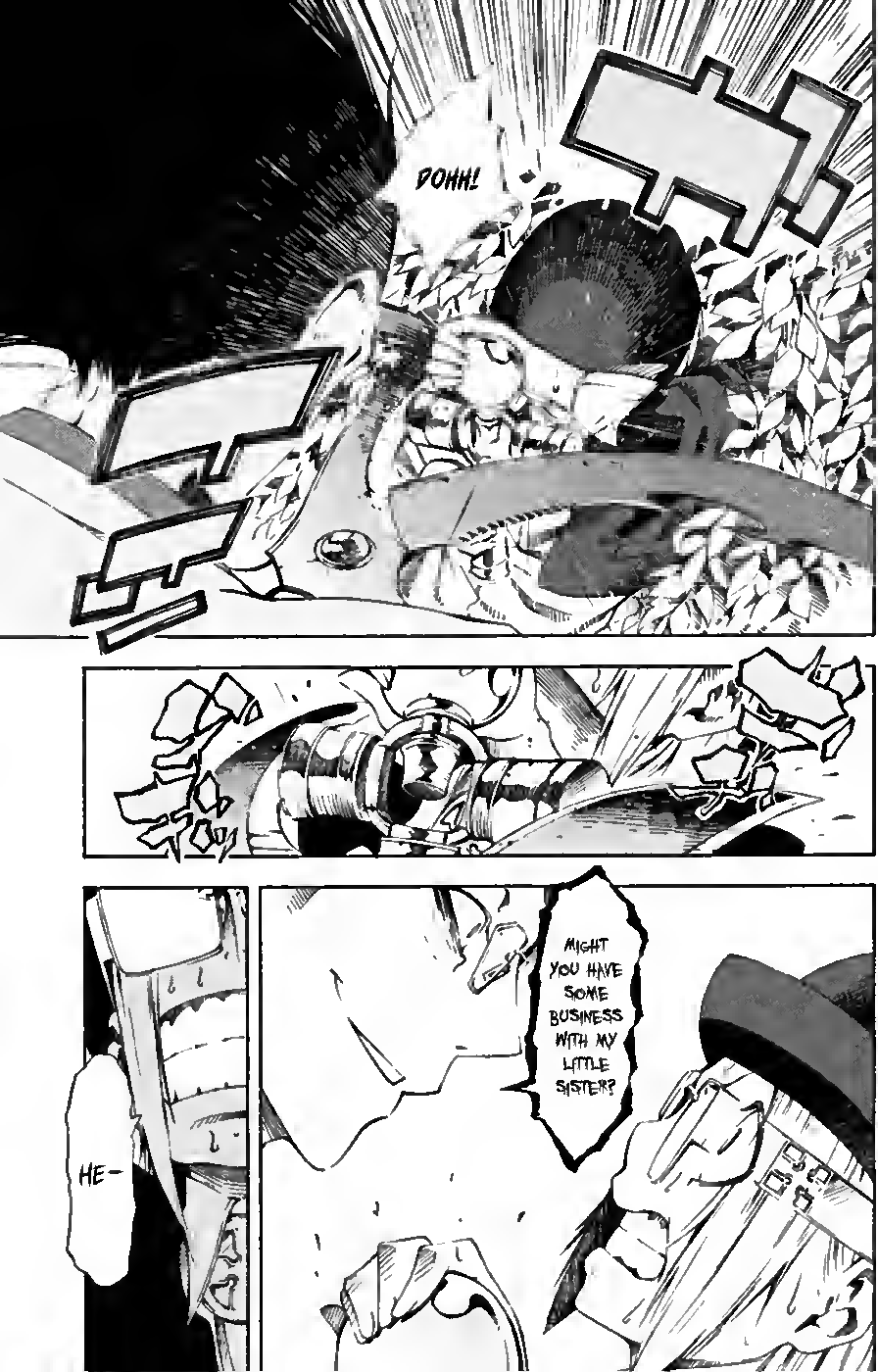

IO...
I...
IO...
WHAT WAS HER NAME...?

Tori-chan, sorry for the wait

O... ONEE-SAN, HOW ABOUT WE HAVE A PICNIC WHERE NO ONE ELSE IS AROUND ?!
AND THEN YOU ARE GOING TO KIDNAP ME, RIGHT?! I JUST KNOW IT!

DESU
Mind Reader!!
WHOA!
WAH..
THAT MEANS, THIS GUY REALLY IS...
SCISSORS!

COMBAT REALLY ISN'T MY,
SPECIALTY.
BUT,


DOHH!
MIGHT YOU HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH MY LITTLE SISTER?
HE-

HELP!!
STOP THIS GUY, IORI-SAN !!
EHH?!
BUT AREN'T YOU HERE TO KIDNAP ME?!
I-
I'VE DECIDED!
Umm ...
... Uhh.
IS THAT SO?
NO,
-WELL, YEAH, BUT...

AS OF THIS MOMENT, I, HAHAMAKI KOJIKA,
WILL QUIT KIDNAPPING!
IORI-SAN'S ONII-SAN!
PLEASE BELIEVE ME,
P...
.....
BROTHER BROTHER BROTHER

Okay, let's believe him.
FLOW
YOU'RE SO SIMPLE!
NOW, NOW, I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL, BUT THE TRUTH IS, RIGHT NOW WE NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET.
...RIGHT,
SPEAKING OF HELP,
COULD YOU HELP ME BY TURNING AROUND FOR A SECOND AND PUTTING YOUR HANDS TOGETHER BEHIND YOUR BACK?
?
LIKE... THIS?
GOOD, JUST LIKE THAT.
SQUEEZE

GYAAHH!!
-DEN?!
SUD-
WHAT ARE YOU DOING ALL OF A
WH-
YOU'RE THE ONE THAT DID THIS!!
THAT'S QUITE A HUMOROUS LOOK ON YOU, IORI-CHAN
UWAH.
BONK

COME ON!
AND DON'T JUST STAND THERE, KOJIKA-KUN - HELP ME!
EHH- BUT, LOOK...
...SIBLINGS IN DIFFERENT FAMILIES EACH HAVE THEIR OWN WAY OF EXPRESSING LOVE, SO
STICKING MY NOSE IN HERE IS A BIT, YOU KNOW..
THAT'S NOT WHAT THIS IS!
FUFU FU
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M THINKING OF RAPING MY LITTLE SISTER, SO DON'T WORRY
THIS IS ACTUALLY FOR YOUR SAKE.
UNAH
AS LONG AS YOU HAVE THOSE ON,

You won't needlessly kill anyone

THOSE TWO HANDS ARE MUCH TOO DANGEROUS.
TOGETHER WITH YOUR HOMICIDAL DISPOSITION,
THEY CAN VERY WELL BE CONSIDERED LETHAL WEAPONS.
B-
BUT EVEN IF YOU SAY I HAVE THE DISPOSITION,
I'M ALWAYS SPACING OUT AND...
It's not a matter of having killed people.
Nor does it concern your method of killing or whether or not you have killing intent.
LISTEN, IORI-CHAN,
.....

THE FACT THAT YOU ARE CAPABLE OF KILLING HUMANS
THAT IN ITSELF IS THE PROBLEM

What you have, isn't the talent to kill people.
But the disposition to kill people
PEOPLE CAN NEVER GO AGAINST THEIR OWN NATURE.
For us homicidal monsters, the choice of "won't kill" doesn't exist.
WHEN WE MEET WITH PEOPLE, OUR ONLY OPTION, IS TO "KILL".
And initially, that was our prerequisite.

THE ONE WHO KILLED JION-KUN AT YOUR SCHOOL WAS ME
YOU HAVEN'T *KILLED* ANYONE YET.
IF YOU LOOK AT IT OBJECTIVELY, YOU HAVE PLENTY OF ROOM TO RETURN TO NORMAL...
BUT...
IORI-CHAN, UP UNTIL THE VERY END, YOU'VE JUST BEEN AN ORDINARY INDIVIDUAL PRACTICING SELF-DEFENSE.
EVEN WITH THIS PUPPET CASE, IF YOU HADN'T BEEN ATTACKED,
IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT YOU WOULDN'T HAVE AWAKENED YOUR HOMICIDAL TENDENCIES.
WHICH IS WHY...
I THOUGHT I'D LIKE TO BET ON THAT POSSIBILITY.

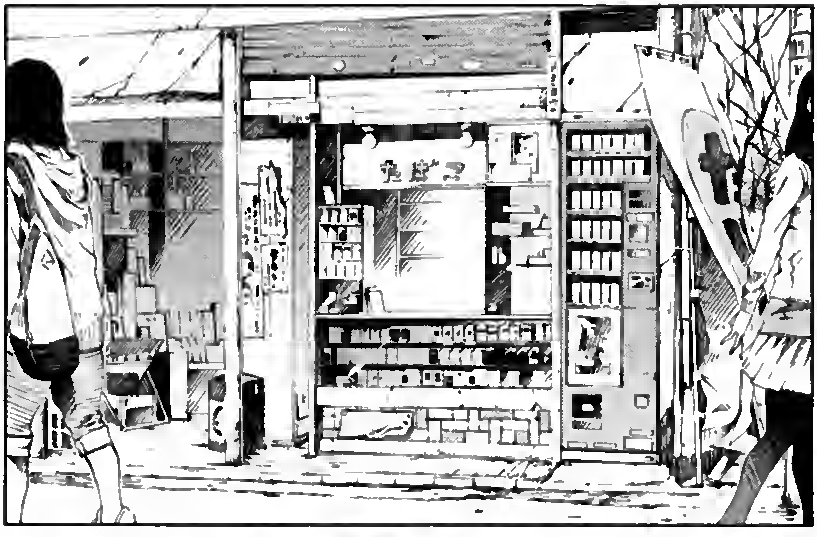
The possibility
Of a homicidal monster that doesn't kill, and isn't alone.

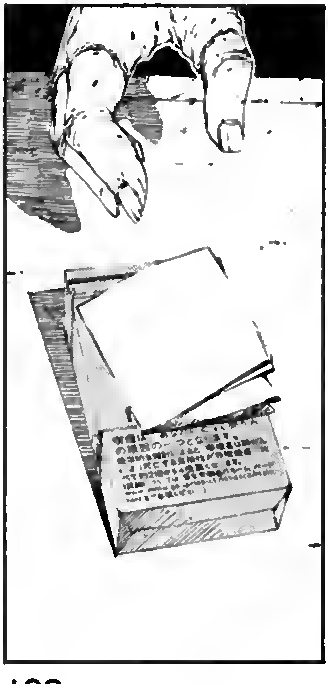
NOW THEN,
KOJIKA-KUN.. WAS IT?
HONESTLY, I'D LOVE TO MOVE ON TO YOUR EXAM RIGHT NOW, BUT I HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO
WOULD YOU PLEASE LOOK AFTER IORI-CHAN FOR ME WHILE I'M GONE?
M.. ME?
NO WAY!
WHY NOT?
BECAUSE, THIS KID SAID HE CAME HERE TO KIDNAP ME!
HE HAS TO BE THAT SAWARA-SOME-THING-SAN'S FRIEND!
IT'S OKAY.

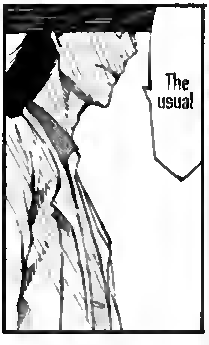
IF YOU REALLY ARE KIDNAPPED, THEY'LL PROBABLY JUST TAKE AN ARM OR A LEG AFTER SOME TORTURING.
プヒッ
COULD YOU PLEASE NOT SAY SUCH SCARY THINGS SO EASILY?!
ANYWAY, HAVING YOU CONSTANTLY BY MY SIDE,
AND BOOSTING YOUR HOMICIDAL IMPULSES ISN'T WHAT I WISH FOR YOU.
UFufu
I'M TRUSTING YOU
YOU TOO, KOJIKA-KUN.
UNTIL I TAKE CARE OF CERTAIN AFFAIRS, JUST BEAR WITH THOSE RESTRAINTS AND THIS SITUATION

ALRIGHT, SEE YOU LATER.
I'LL BE BACK
な、な、な、な
So scary~
I thought I was going to die...
And what were those, those giant pruning scissors ...?!

FAIL!
.....
NOW THAT WE'RE ALONE,
WELL, WHAT-EVER
.....
Let's go on a date!






The usual

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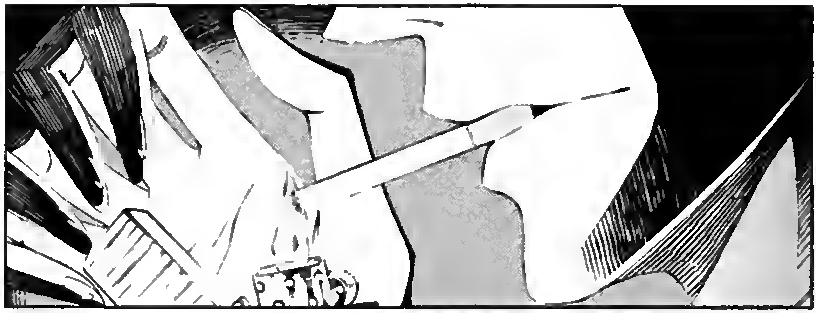
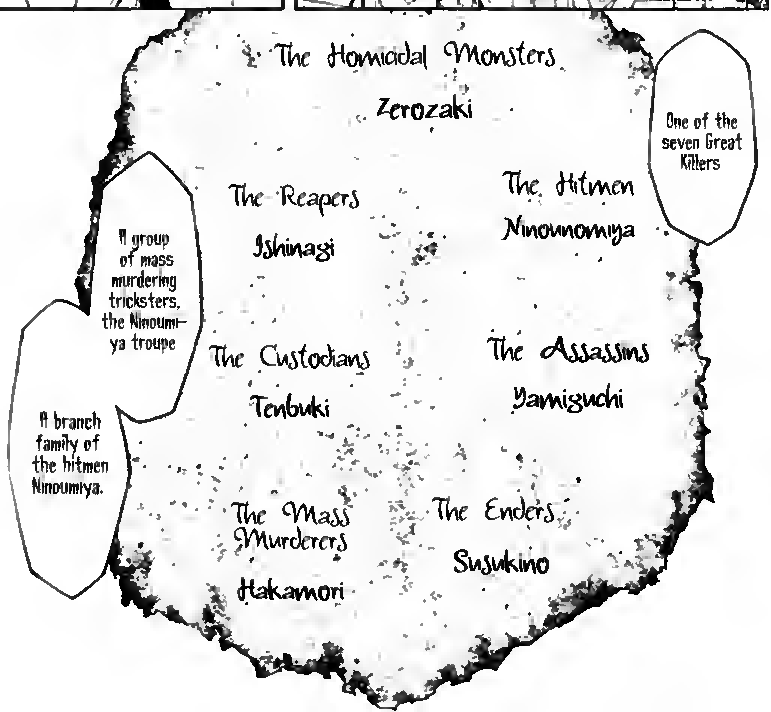


The Sawarabi family


The Homicidal Monsters
Zerozaki
One of the seven Great Killers
The Hitmen
Ninounomiya
The Reapers
Ishinagi
A group of mass murdering tricksters, the Ninoumiya troupe
The Custodians
Tenbuki
The Assassins
Yamiguchi
A branch family of the hitmen Ninoumiya.
The Mass Murderers
Hakamori
The Enders
Susukino

SAWARABI FAMILY, CURRENT HEAD AND FIRST SON, TACHI*-WIELDER SAWARABI HAWATARI.
SECOND SON, NAGINATA-WIELDER SAWARABI NAGUMA
AND THE ONE MY BROTHER KILLED, FIRST DAUGHTER, BOW-WIELDER SAWARABI YUMIYA.
THIS SHORT・MID・LONG RANGE COMBINATION WAS THE SELLING POINT OF THESE THREE SIBLINGS.

*T/N: A LONG SWORD.

THE SAWARABIS' ACCOMPLICE, TOKINOMIYA TOKEI.
ONE OF HIS MOST FAMOUS SPELLS IS "TOKINOMIYA HOSPITAL" AGE UNKNOWN
HE'S MOST LIKELY THE CREATOR OF BOTH THE PUPPETS AND THE BARRIER.
WHOOPS... I HAVE HIS INFORMA-TION, TOO.
SSIVE.
HANAMAK I KOJIKA, PRIVATE KIDNAPPER
NO SPONSORS OR RELATIVES TO SPEAK OF— IS IT?
WHILE I NARROW DOWN THE POSSIBLE PLACES WHERE THE SAWARABIS MIGHT BE HIDING, MAYBE I'LL CHECK ON THE SITUATION AT IORI-CHAN'S SCHOOL.
……

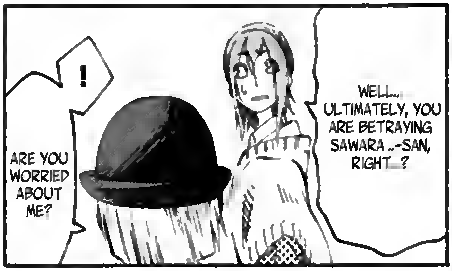
THOSE TWO... I WONDERING IF THEY'RE GETTING ALONG...
.....
.....

UMM...
SERIOUSLY, WHAT DO I DO HERE..?
ON TOP OF HAVING MY HANDS TIED, I HAVE TO BE ALONE WITH HIM...?!
UGH!
UNAH?!

I WAS.. WONDERING IF THESE THINGS CAME OFF..
EH, AH, WELL..
WH-
WH- WH- WH- WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

.....

SORRY...
BUT IT LOOK LIKE IT'S IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT SOMETHING REALLY SHARP..


!
ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT ME?
WELL... ULTIMATELY, YOU ARE BETRAYING SAWARA..-SAN, RIGHT..?

UMM.. KOJIKA-KUN,
I'M NOT REALLY ONE TO SAY THIS, BUT CAN I ASK YOU SOME-THING?
MM?
WHAT IS IT?

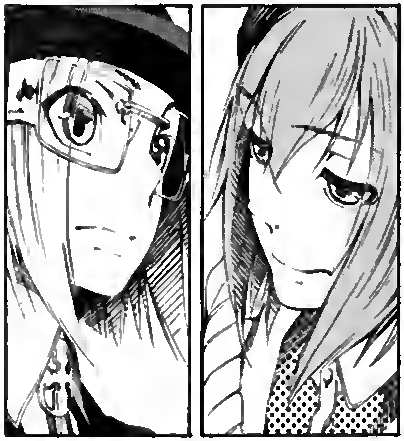
FUFUN.
THAT'S NOT IT.
SO YOU REALLY DID FALL FOR ME?

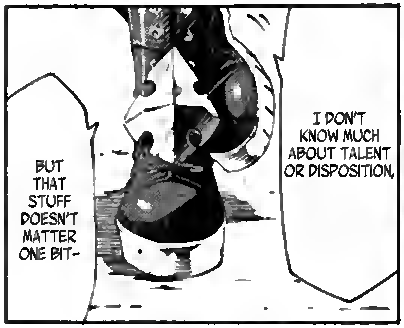
It's something I chose to do on my own.
Chose...

That's how I've lived my life until now, all on my own
Make your own decisions and make your own choices.
It's your life
.....
WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU MAKE MISTAKES OR HAVE REGRETS?
IT'S EASY TO LIVE BY FOLLOWING SOMEONE ELSE'S DIRECTIONS OR ORDERS, BUT-
SUCCESS AND FAILURE, HONOR AND SHAME, THEY'RE ALL BORN OF MY OWN DECISIONS.
IF IT'S A PATH YOU CHOSE FOR YOURSELF, THEN ISN'T THAT FINE?

Isn't living that way.
The same as being a puppet?

ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THAT "POSSIBILITY" THING I HEARD EARLIER?




I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT TALENT OR DISPOSITION,
BUT THAT STUFF DOESN'T MATTER ONE BIT--

BUT, I-
I'M AFRAID OF CHANGING AS A RESULT OF MY CHOICES.

It's impossible to keep running away from.
I'm pretty sure,
A time comes when everyone has to make a choice.
When that time comes,
I will definitely choose on my own.
?
RIGHT NOW...
I DECIDED ON SOMETHING, TOO

I promise.
.....
ISN'T THAT KIND OF UNFAIR?
NO, IT'S NOT!
THERE'S MEANING TO THE THINGS YOU DECIDE FOR YOURSELF.
IT'S TRUE.
I DON'T KNOW.
I DON'T KNOW...
QUESTION 6 END

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by NisiOisiN and SHIOMIYA Iruka

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QC. Ell

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QUESTION 7
HEY, IORI-SAN?
HMM?
WHAT IS IT, KOJIKA-KUN?
I'VE BEEN THINKING THIS SINCE WE MET, BUT...
IORI-SAN, YOU'RE SURPRISINGLY,
Ordinary.
!?

Are you sure they weren't making fun of you...?
AH NO...
I MEANT ORDINARY IN TERMS OF OUR LINE OF BUSINESS...
ORDINARY...
THEY USED TO ADORE ME AT SCHOOL AS THE "DANCING PRINCESS", AND YOU'RE SAYING I'M ORDINARY...?

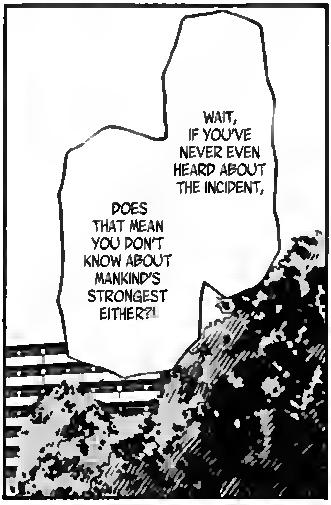
A HOMICIDAL MONSTER IS MORE LIKE..
YOUR VIBE IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM MIND RENDER'S WHEN I FACED HIM.
YOU DON'T REALLY HAVE THAT ZEROZAKI FEEL.

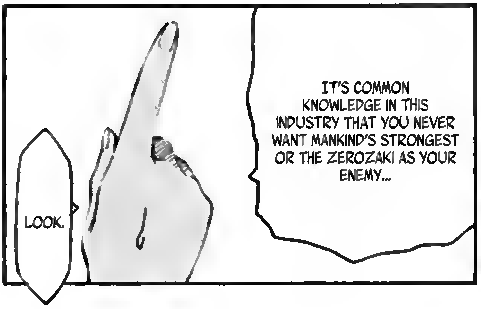
That serial killer from Kyoto.
The one that dismembered 12 people.

ACCORDING TO RUMORS, THE CONTRACTOR IS AFTER THE CULPRIT.
SURPRISINGLY, THEY SAY THAT THE CULPRIT WAS A ZERO-ZAKI, TOO.

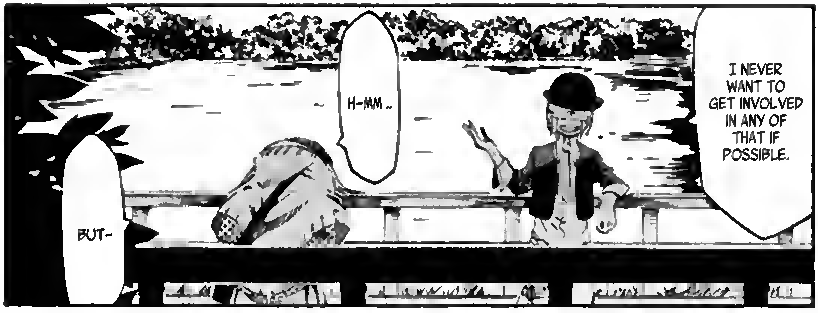
HEE-
SO THERE WAS A MURDER IN KYOTO?
IT WAS EVEN ON THE NEWS..
NEVER HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT IT

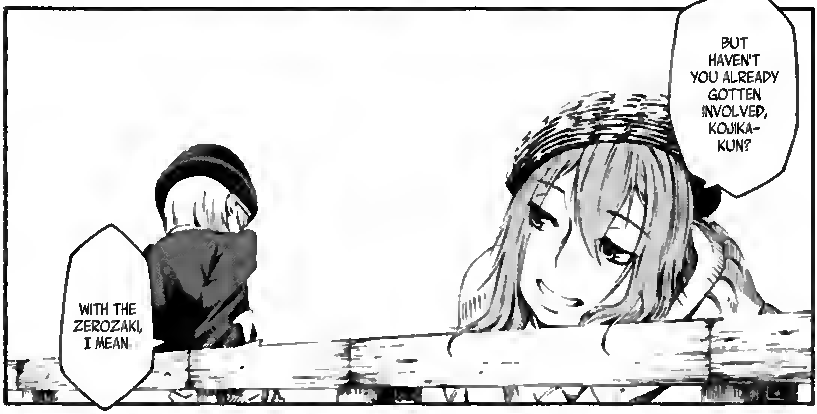
STRONGEST, HUH?! SOUNDS STRONG...
.....

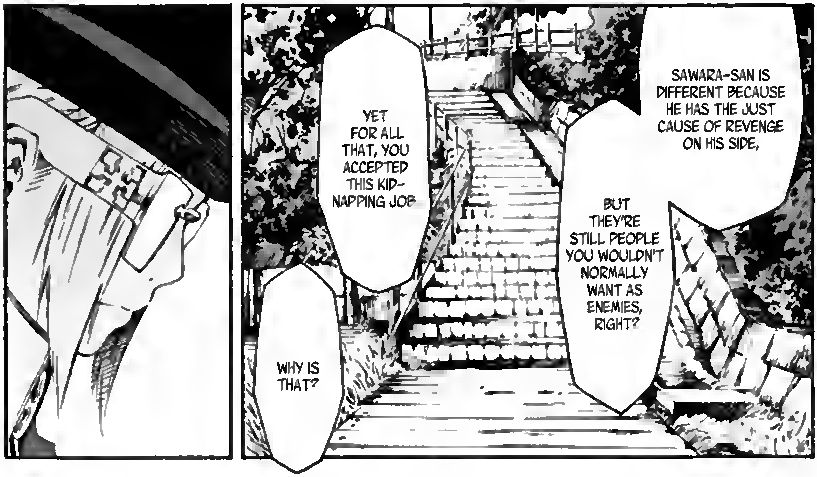

WAIT, IF YOU'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD ABOUT THE INCIDENT,
DOES THAT MEAN YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT MANKIND'S STRONGEST EITHER?!


IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE IN THIS INDUSTRY THAT YOU NEVER WANT MANKIND'S STRONGEST OR THE ZEROZAKI AS YOUR ENEMY...
LOOK.

Occupation, Contractor.
"Crimson Death", "Desert Hawk", "Scarlet Judge"
She has countless aliases.
With her entire body clad in red, she takes on any job. She's mankind's strongest woman.
They say she's soft on those close to her, but doesn't hold back one bit against her enemies.


I NEVER WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN ANY OF THAT IF POSSIBLE.
H-MM..
BUT-


BUT HAVEN'T YOU ALREADY GOTTEN INVOLVED, KOJIKA-KUN?
WITH THE ZEROZAKI, I MEAN.

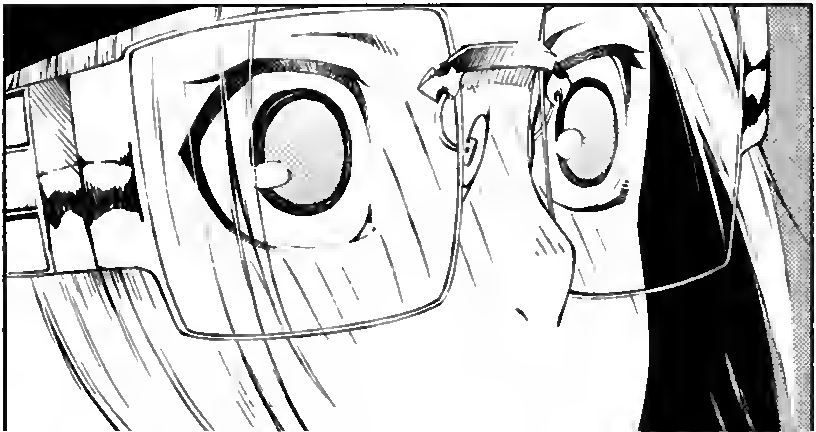

SAWARA-SAN IS DIFFERENT BECAUSE HE HAS THE JUST CAUSE OF REVENGE ON HIS SIDE,
BUT THEY'RE STILL PEOPLE YOU WOULDN'T NORMALLY WANT AS ENEMIES, RIGHT?
YET FOR ALL THAT, YOU ACCEPTED THIS KIDNAPPING JOB.
WHY IS THAT?

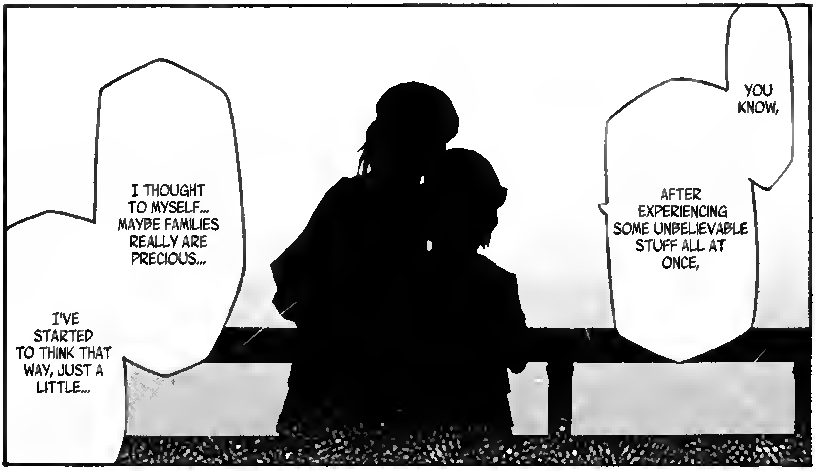
... YOU WON'T LAUGH?
NO, NOT REALLY
I JUST ACCEPTED THIS JOB BECAUSE IT HAD A GOOD PAYOUT.
SO YOU WANT MONEY?
NO
THE MONEY IS JUST A MEANS TO AN END
WHAT I REALLY WANT IS...
A HOME.
A HOME ...?

A home to return to.
And a warm family.
WHAT ABOUT YOUR DAD AND MOM?
.....
I DON'T HAVE PARENTS
I WAS ORIGINALLY A KIDNAPPED CHILD
THAT'S WHY I ACCEPTED THIS JOB.
BECAUSE, EVEN IF I FAIL,

I'll be the only one who dies.
REALLY?
EVERYONE HAS ALWAYS MADE FUN OF ME OR LOOKED DOWN ON ME WHEN I'VE TALKED ABOUT THIS...
HEY..
IT'S FUNNY, RIGHT? IT'S A CHILDISH DREAM.
NOT AT ALL.

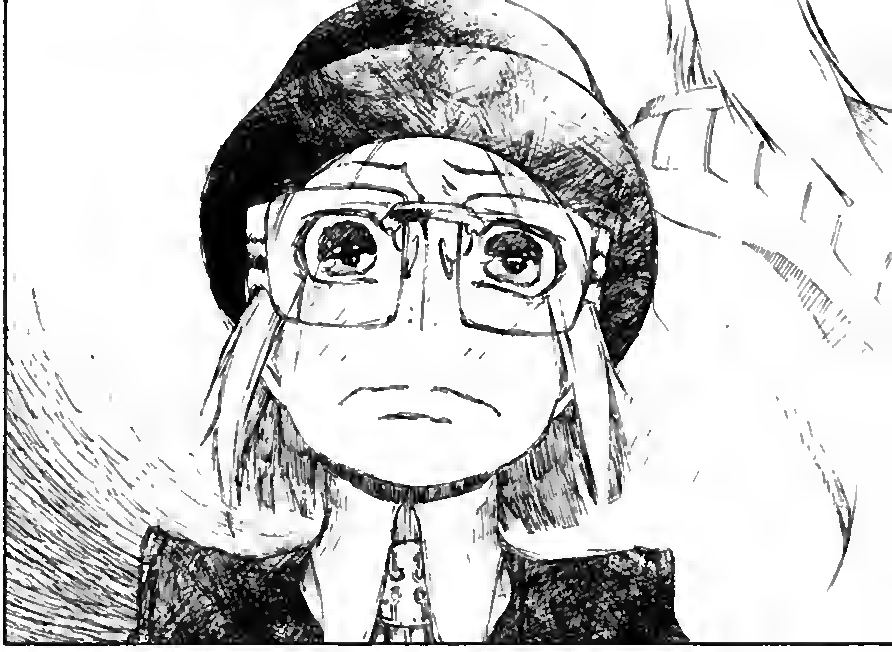
I wouldn't do that.




YOU KNOW,
AFTER EXPERIENCING SOME UNBELIEVABLE STUFF ALL AT ONCE,
I THOUGHT TO MYSELF... MAYBE FAMILIES REALLY ARE PRECIOUS...
I'VE STARTED TO THINK THAT WAY, JUST A LITTLE...

ALTHOUGH IT'S KIND OF TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW.

But that's exactly why being able to think dearly of family~
I'm sure that in itself is something wonderful.



LOOK OVER THERE.

AH,
.....

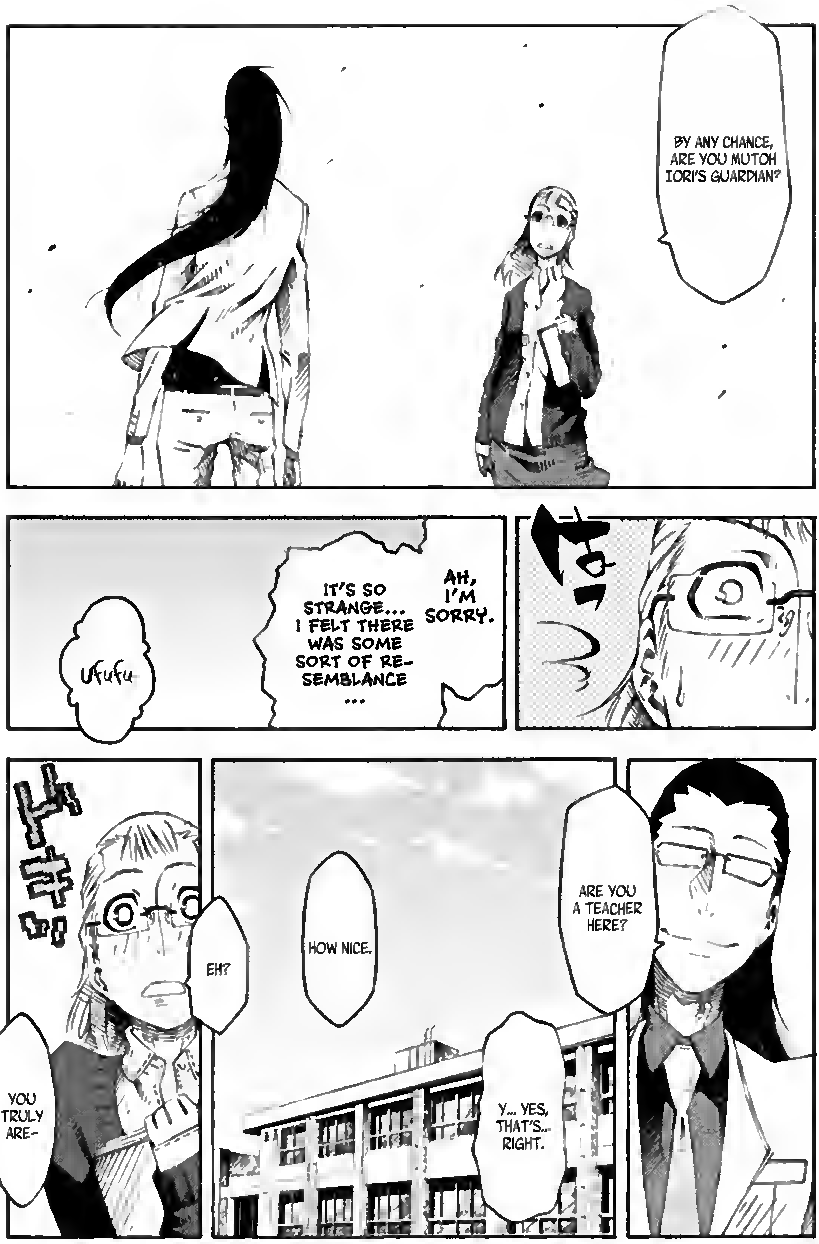
LET'S TAKE A LITTLE BREAK BEFORE WE LEAVE.

ACTUALLY, I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SLEEP AT ALL SINCE YESTERDAY
IORI-CHAN'S TOTALLY EXHAUSTED-
STOP SAYING THINGS LIKE THAT..
WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...
SOUNDS LIKE AN ORDINARY LIFE...

I SUPPOSED IT'S A GIVEN, SEEING AS IT NO LONGER SERVES ANY PURPOSE TO THOSE SAWARABI...
THE BARRIER HERE WILL SOON FALL APART, AS WELL...

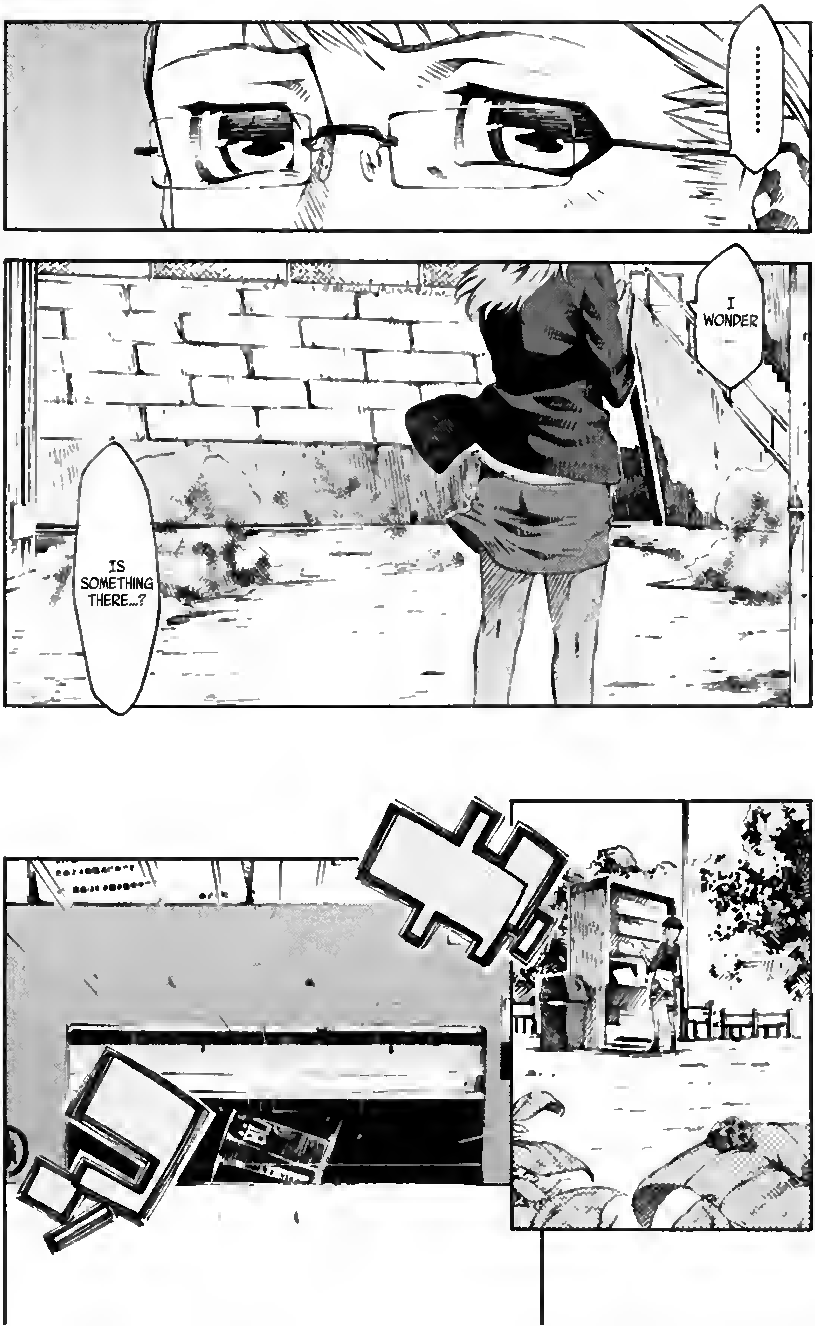
I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO ASK THEM TO TAKE CARE OF MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION PROCESSING FOR THE CONDOS, TOO

UMM.. EXCUSE ME,
MIGHT YOU BE A GUARDIAN?
IF YOU HAVE BUSINESS HERE, THEN YOU SHOULD ENTER THROUGH THE MAIN GATE AND HEAD TO THE... FACULTY...
UMM...


BY ANY CHANCE, ARE YOU MUTOH IORI'S GUARDIAN?
AH, I'M SORRY.
IT'S SO STRANGE... I FELT THERE WAS SOME SORT OF RE-SEMBLANCE ...
Ufufu
ARE YOU A TEACHER HERE?
Y... YES, THAT'S... RIGHT.
HOW NICE.
EH?
YOU TRULY ARE-

ORDINARY.
NO, NO, I'M PRAISING YOU WHEN I CALL YOU ORDINARY.
I'M DULL, WITH NO PERSONALITY...
SHOCK
AHH. I GUESS I REALLY AM ORDINARY, AFTER ALL....
WHICH IS WHY, IF POSSIBLE,
FURTHERMORE, ONCE THEY LET GO OF THE "ORDINARY", THEY'RE UNABLE TO GET IT BACK BY ANY HALF-HEARTED MEANS.
END UP HURTING RANDOM PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR OWN WILL.
THOSE WHO AREN'T "ORDINARY", WHETHER THEIR DISPOSITION BE GOOD OR EVIL,

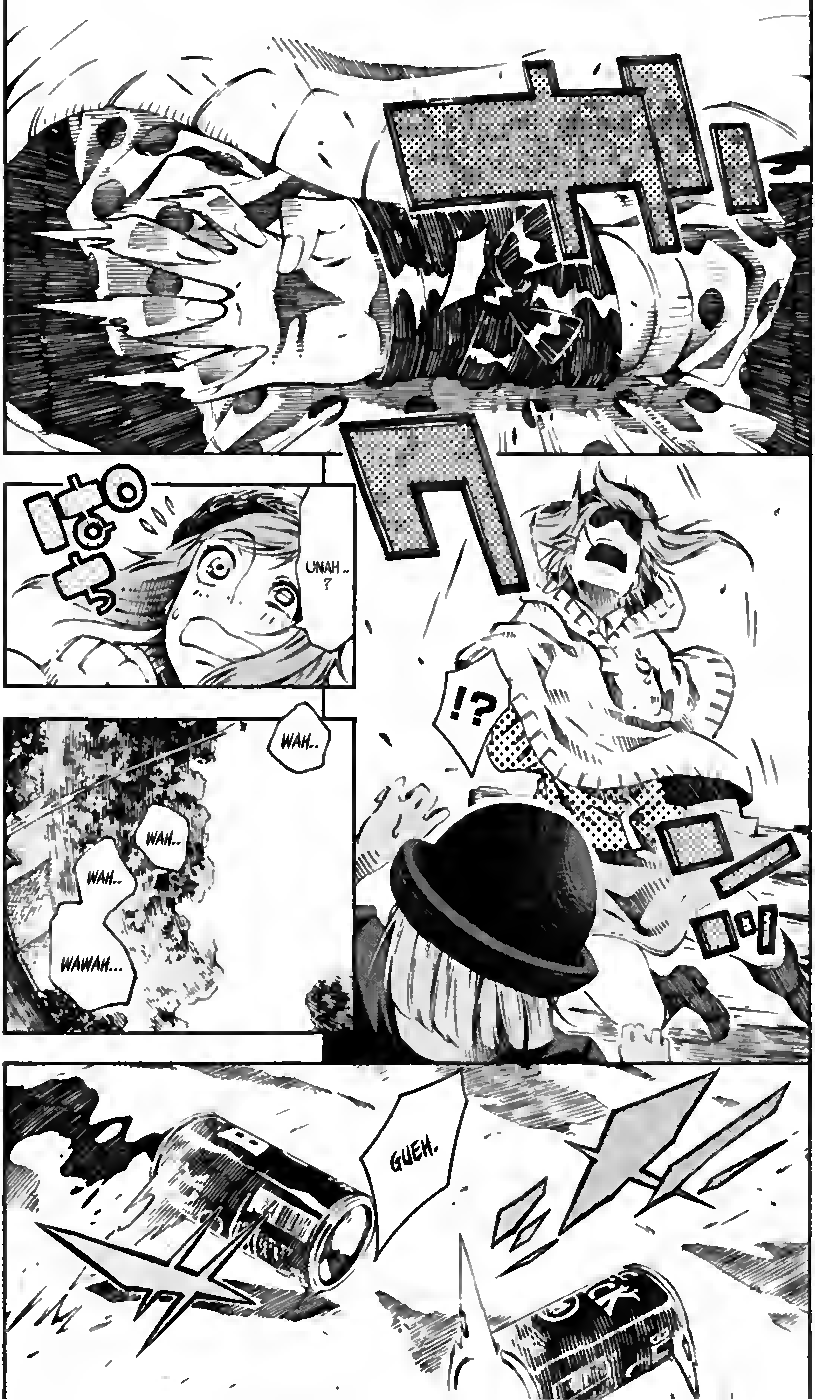
I would like to give her the choice of living an ordinary life as well
.....
?
.....
AHH, I'M SORRY
THIS STRANGER WILL BE EXCUSING HIMSELF NOW


.....
I WONDER
IS SOMETHING THERE...?

HERE, IORI-SAN,
SOME COFFEE TO WAKE YOU UP...
SHE'S SLEEPING WITH BOTH HER HANDS TIED...
THAT'S SOME SKILL THERE...
POP

WHO IS THAT...?
SOUSHIKI-SAN...? NO, THAT'S NOT HIM...
ARE YOU NEARBY...?
KILLS...?
RIGHT...
A MONSTER THAT KILLS PEOPLE...
A HOMICIDAL MONSTER...
I SHOULDN'T KNOW YOU!
BUT I FEEL LIKE I KNOW YOU...

I HAVE TO KILL.

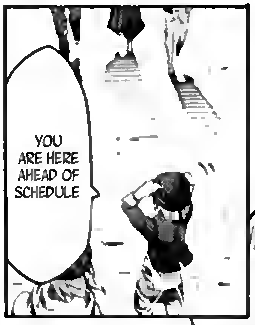

UNAH..
?
!?
WAH..
WAH..
WAH..
WAWAH...
GUEH.

.....
OWW... I'M SORRY..
LOOKS LIKE I WAS HALF ASLEEP..
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
AH, YEAH, I'M FINE.
I'M FINE...
...KOJIKA-KUN?
EH...
AH, WHAT?

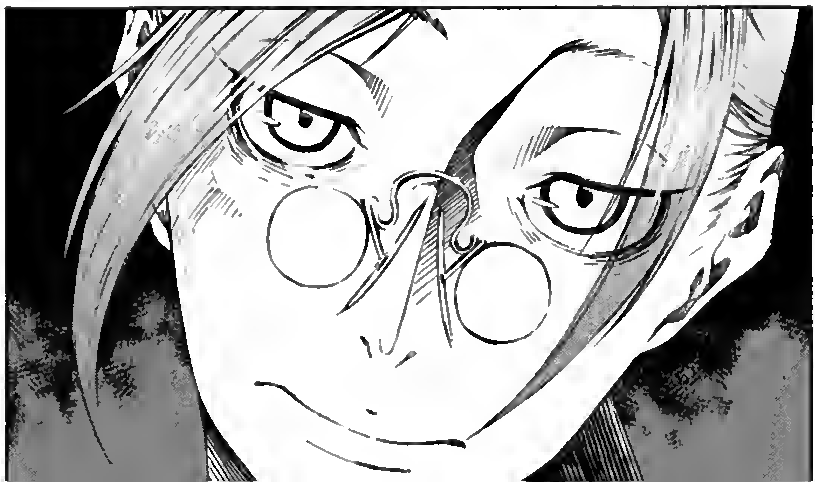
.....

IT WAS A PURER CONCENTRATION OF BLOODLUST
IT'S DIFFERENT FROM MIND RENDER'S MENACING BLOODLUST

AHH,


YOU ARE HERE AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

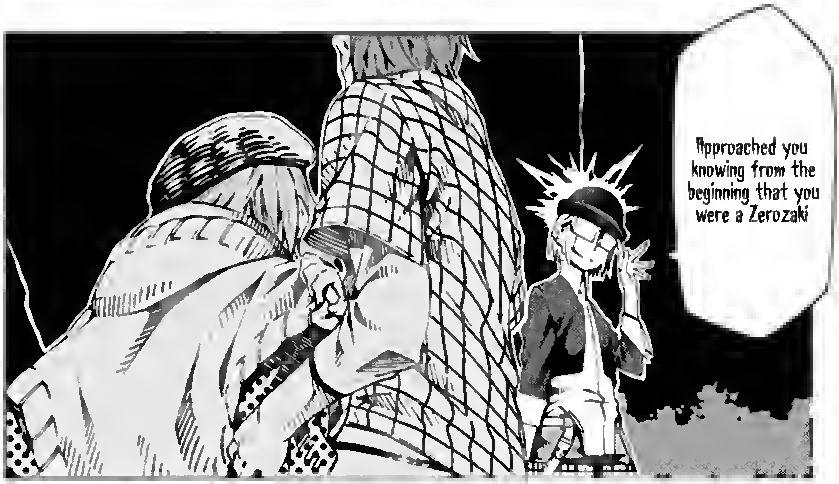
ZEROZAKI...
.....

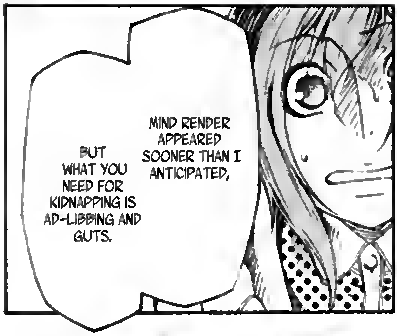


SAWARA-SAN?!
IT'S SAWARA!!
YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW THIS,
BUT NAMES ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT TO US.
WOULD YOU PLEASE REFRAIN FROM SHORTENING IT FOR YOUR OWN CONVENIENCE?
WH... WHY ARE YOU HERE?
WHY?
WHY NOT USE YOUR HEAD BEFORE ASKING QUESTIONS?
I'VE SIMPLY COME TO COLLECT MY HOSTAGE
EH?
DID YOU NOT NOTICE?

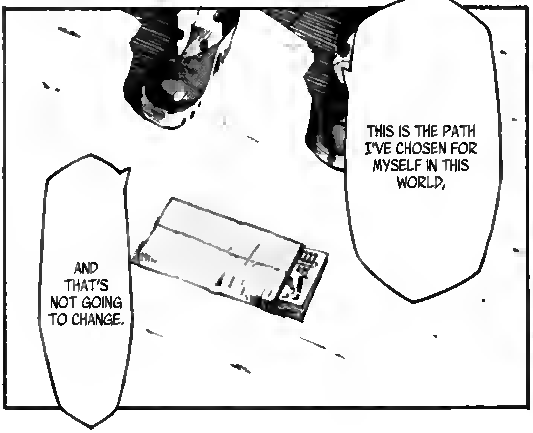
That you were kidnapped here?
THAT YOU WERE LED... NO,
THEN, HE TAKES THE TARGET TO A DESIGNATED LOCATION
HE DELIBERATELY OPENS UP TO YOU AND GETS YOU TO WARM UP TO HIM.
YOU ARE ALREADY WITHIN OUR BARRIER
That's how that kidnapper there operates.

NICE WORK.
EH!
WAIT!
You can disappear to wherever you wish
THIS COMPLETES YOUR JOB
PLEASE, LET GO OF ME!
.....
HEY, IORI-SAN,
TRUTH IS, I...


Approached you knowing from the beginning that you were a Zerozaki


BUT WHAT YOU NEED FOR KIDNAPPING IS AD-LIBBING AND GUTS.
MIND RENDER APPEARED SOONER THAN I ANTICIPATED,

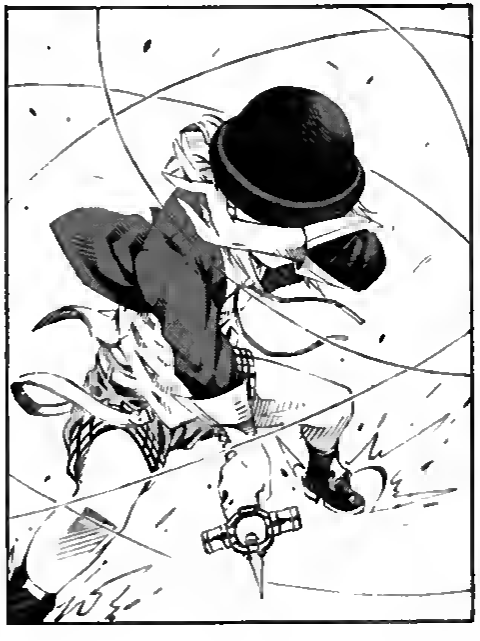
HAVING THE PUPPET ATTACK YOU, SAVING YOU FROM THAT PUPPET, OUR CONVERSATIONS, MY ACTIONS,
ALL OF IT WAS AN ACT


AND THAT'S NOT GOING TO CHANGE.
THIS IS THE PATH I'VE CHOSEN FOR MYSELF IN THIS WORLD,

I WAS PRETTY GOOD, RIGHT?

AT LEAST, IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO, BUT...

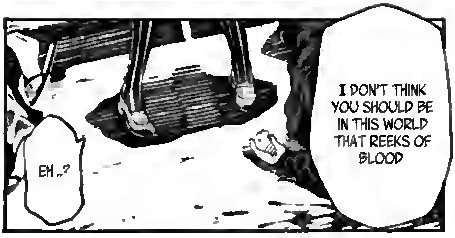
Fufun
SORRY, SAWARABI-SAN.
MY APOLOGIES FOR REVOKING THE CONTRACT, BUT...
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, KIDNAPPER?

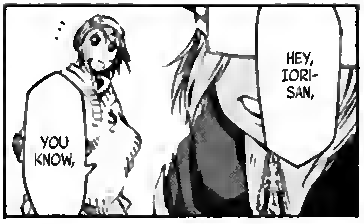


!?

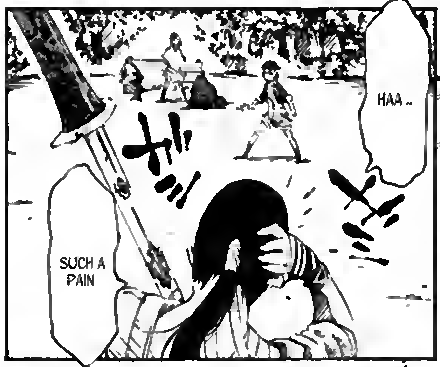
...I'm going to make Iori-san my bride
That's what I decided.
DOES THIS MEAN THAT YOU'RE SIDING WITH THE ZEROZAKI?
COME ON
DON'T GET ME WRONG
I DON'T PLAN TO SIDE WITH THE ZEROZAKI OR THE SAWARABI
I'M GOING TO TAKE CARE OF YOU HERE,
AND MAKE IT LOOK LIKE IORI-SAN WAS KIDNAPPED BY THE SAWARABI.
BY THE TIME THE JIG'S UP, WE'LL BE LONG GONE
THAT'S MY-

Kidnapping plan.


EH..?
I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD BE IN THIS WORLD THAT REEKS OF BLOOD


YOU KNOW,
HEY, IORI-SAN,

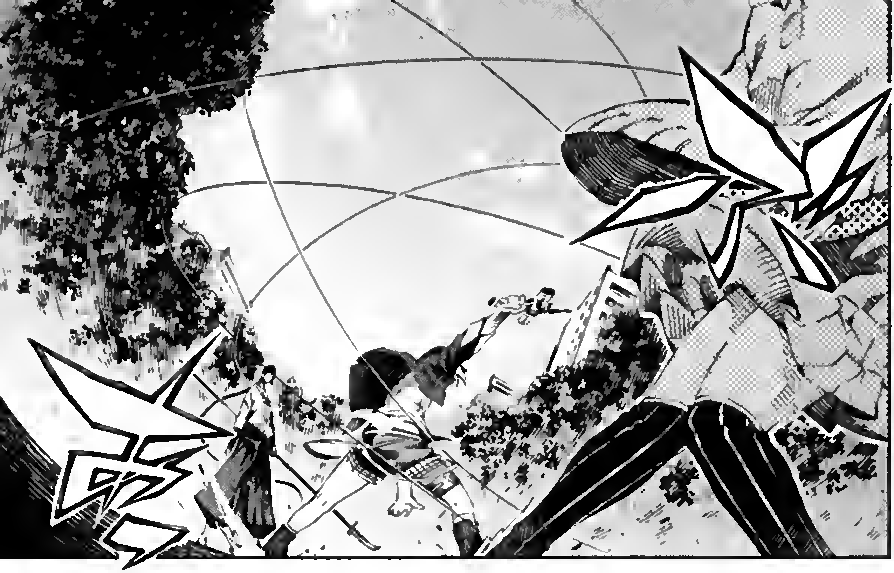
IF GETTING CLOSER TO THIS WORLD MEANS YOU'LL END UP BEING DRIVEN TO MURDEROUS BEHAVIOR,
I KIND OF GET IT NOW.
THE MEANING BEHIND THE "POTENTIAL" THAT MINDER RENDER MENTIONED...

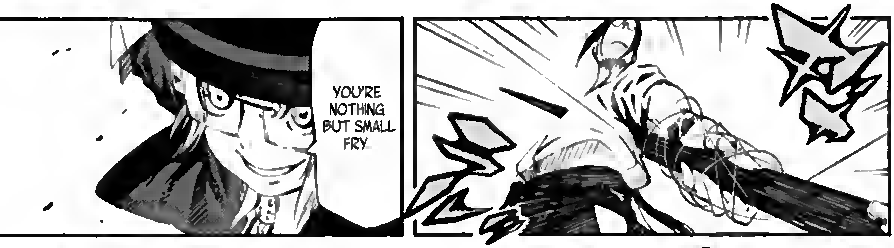

HAA..
SUCH A PAIN

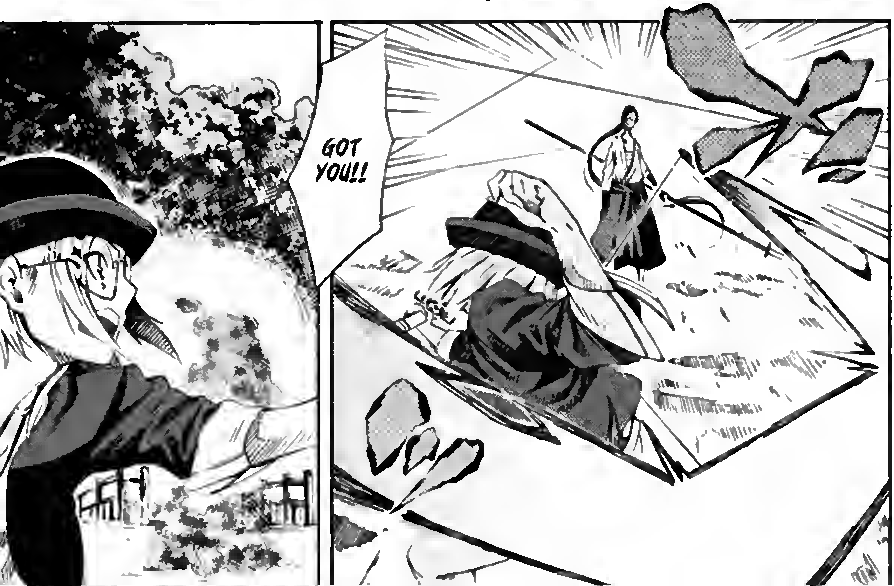
ARE YOU PLANNING TO FIGHT ME WITH THOSE WOUNDS?
IT WOULD BE A DIFFERENT STORY IF YOU WERE AT 100%, BUT BEING WOUNDED-

I KNEW IT WAS WRONG TO RELY ON SOMEONE ELSE'S HELP.

Then I'll kidnap you to a place far away from here.




YOU'RE NOTHING BUT SMALL FRY


GOT YOU!!

!?
CHILD'S PLAY.

!?
SO BOTH YOUR ARMS ARE SEALED.
CON-VENIENT.
WHEN DID HE...! I HAVE TO...
!!
GO PLAY HOUSE BY YOURSELF.
IORI-SAN!

SMALL FRY.

SUFFER
AND DIE

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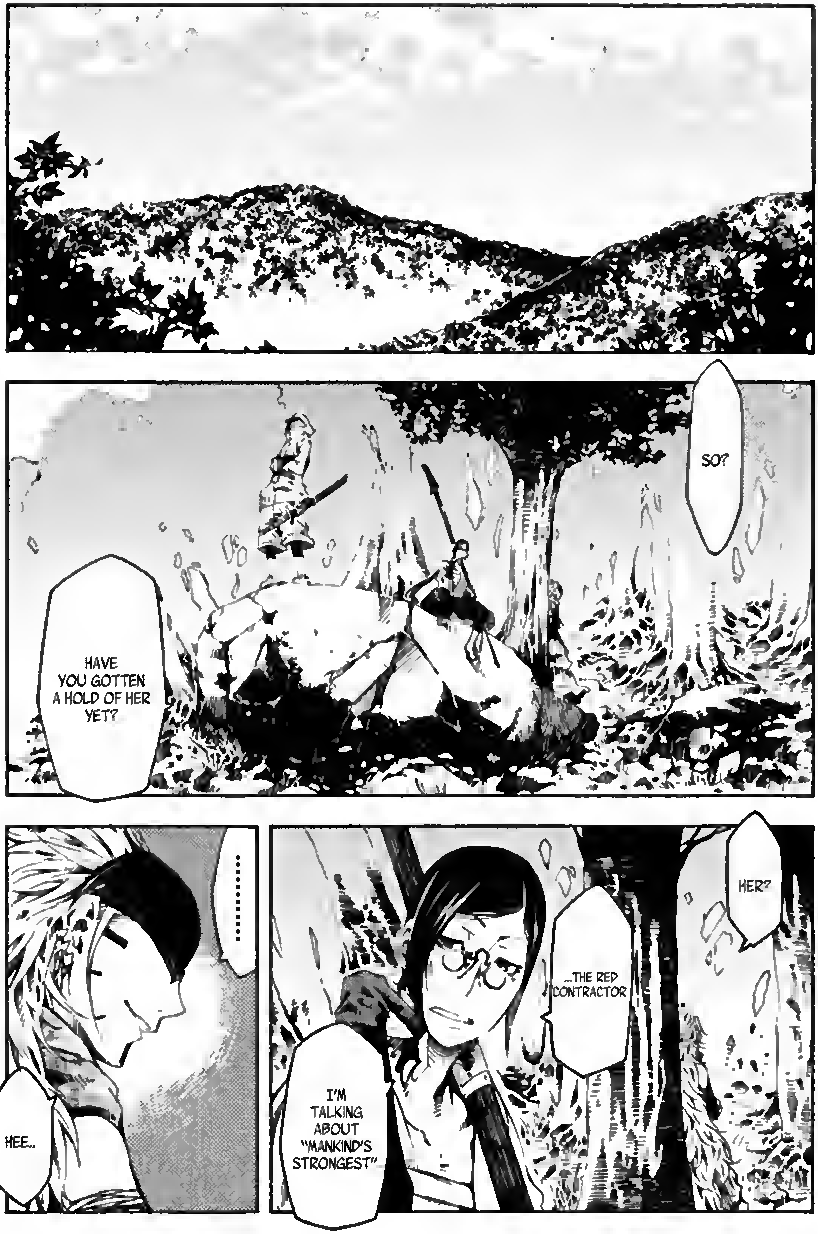
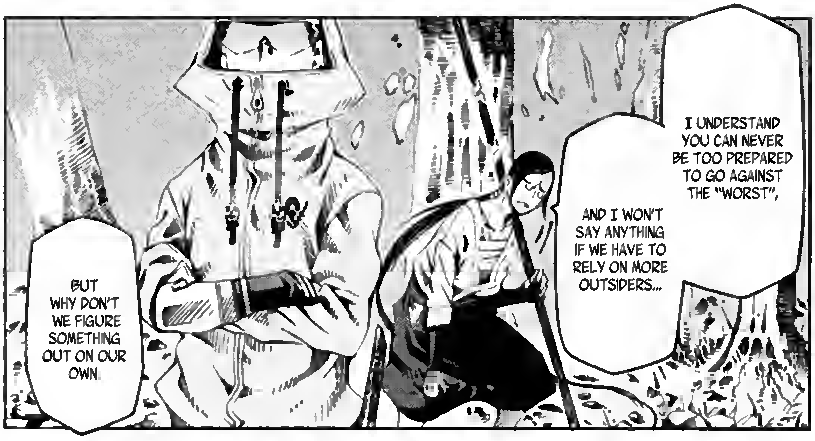
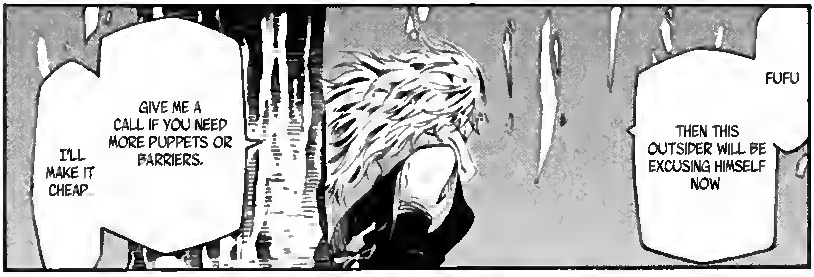
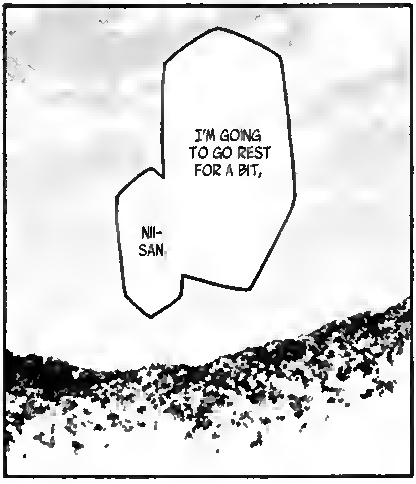
QUESTION 8
WHERE...

...AM I?


SO?
HAVE YOU GOTTEN A HOLD OF HER YET?
HER?
...THE RED CONTRACTOR
I'M TALKING ABOUT "MANKIND'S STRONGEST"
.....
HEE...


I UNDERSTAND YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO PREPARED TO GO AGAINST THE "WORST",
AND I WON'T SAY ANYTHING IF WE HAVE TO RELY ON MORE OUTSIDERS...
BUT WHY DON'T WE FIGURE SOMETHING OUT ON OUR OWN.


FUFU
THEN THIS OUTSIDER WILL BE EXCUSING HIMSELF NOW
GIVE ME A CALL IF YOU NEED MORE PUPPETS OR BARRIERS.
I'LL MAKE IT CHEAP.


I'M GOING TO GO REST FOR A BIT,
NII-SAN.

TCH.
DAMN SCROOGE.

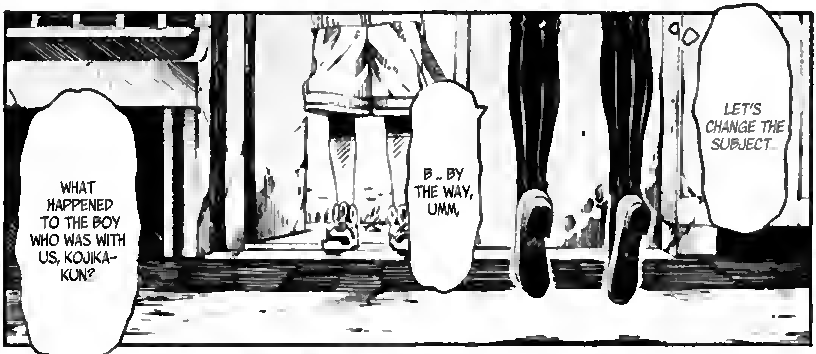
BONDAGE
IMAGE OF A HIGH SCHOOL GIRL
B-

ぶらーん
BUT WAIT, I'M NOT IN MY SCHOOL UNIFORM.
THAT DROPS THE SEXINESS BY HALF
.....
AND FOR ME NOT TO FEEL NERVOUS...
...NO MATTER THE SITUATION,
I GUESS I BELIEVE THAT THAT PERSON WILL COME TO SAVE ME...
"RIDICULOUS"
..THAT'S IT.
"AND I HAVEN'T EVEN KNOWN HIM FOR A DAY YET.
HOW SHOULD I DESCRIBE THIS FEELING?
"FUNNY"?! OH, RIGHT

Rare.
"ALTHOUGH A NATURAL BEING, NATURAL YOU ARE NOT."
I KNEW IT TO BE A FACT, BUT THE PROCESS OF YOUR CHANGE,
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D ACTUALLY SEE IT FOR MYSELF
.....
C... COME ON.
THIS IS WHERE YOU JUMP IN AND SAY "IT'S SAWARABI... WAIT, AGAIN WITH THAT LINE-"
.....
THAT VOICE!
SAWARA-SAN!!

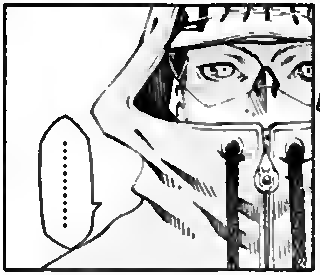
My name is Sawarabi Hawatari.
The one you know is Sawarabi Nagiuma. I am-
His brother.

THIS IS SO EMBARRASSING...
I TRIED TO CRACK A JOKE AND IT WAS THE WRONG PERSON.


WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BOY WHO WAS WITH US, KOJIKA-KUN?
B.. BY THE WAY, UMM,
LET'S CHANGE THE SUBJECT.

I SEE..
EH?

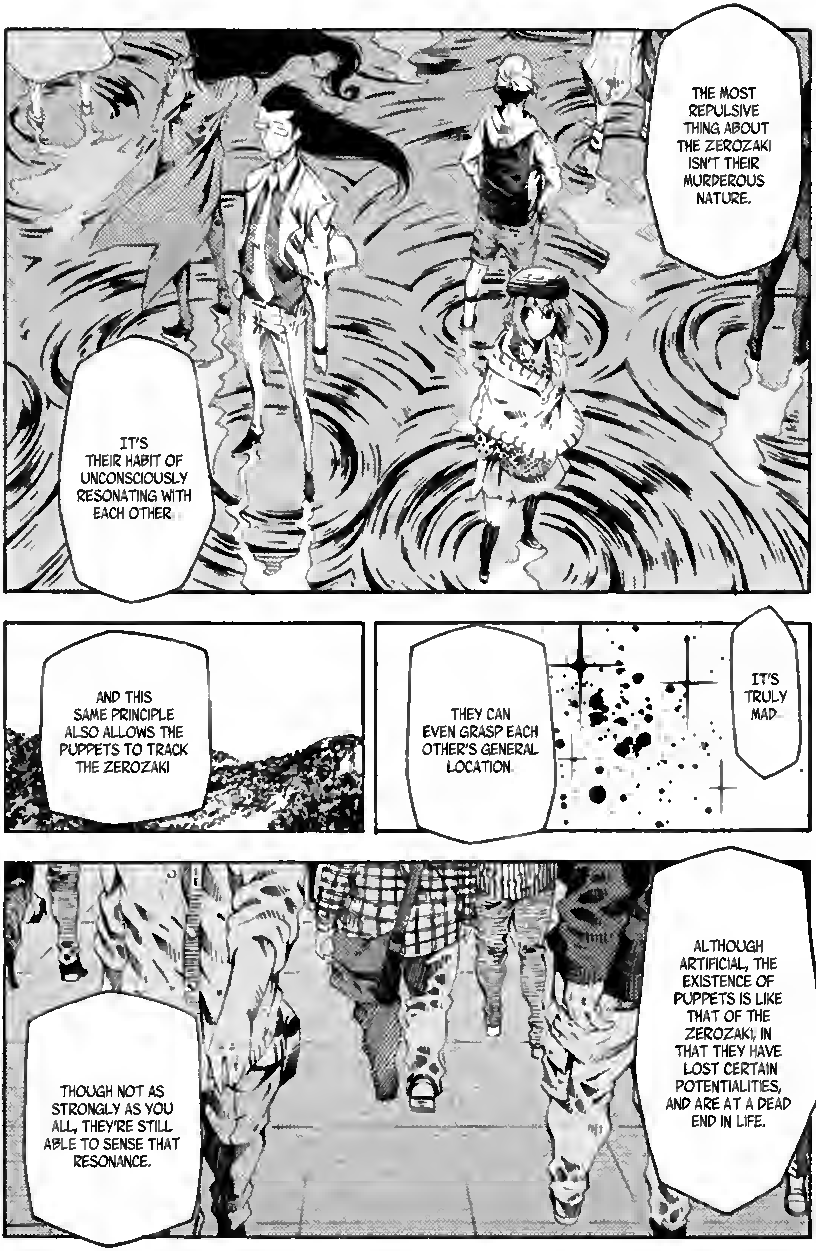
AH.. BUT WELL...
YEAH, I GUESS.


.....

We killed him.
!!

That composure. That abnormality.
And even though your enemy holds your life in the palm of their hand, you don't even shed a tear.
Your schoolmate was used,
your family was killed before your eyes,
and though you just met, the kidnapper you shared conversations with was also killed.
BUT YOU'RE TARGETING THE ZEROZAKI TO AVENGE YOUR LITTLE SISTER RIGHT, SAWARABI-SAN?
THIS IS, UHH, JUST TO BE SURE,
So this is a Zerozaki
EH. UMM,
DOESN'T THAT MEAN THAT YOU STILL DON'T CONSIDER ME A ZEROZAKI?
BUT THE FACT THAT YOU KIDNAPPED ME AND HAVEN'T KILLED ME YET,

YOU SPEAK AS IF YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A ZEROZAKI.
.....
ONCE WE'RE DONE WITH YOU, YOUR LIFE IS NO MORE.
BAIT...
THE REASON YOU'RE ALIVE AND HANGING IS SIMPLY TO LURE ZEROZAKI SOUSHIKI HERE.
All you are is bait.
NOT "AS IF", THAT IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN
YOU SAY THAT AS IF SOUSHIKI-SAN WOULD JUST NATURALLY SNIFF HIS WAY HERE.
.....

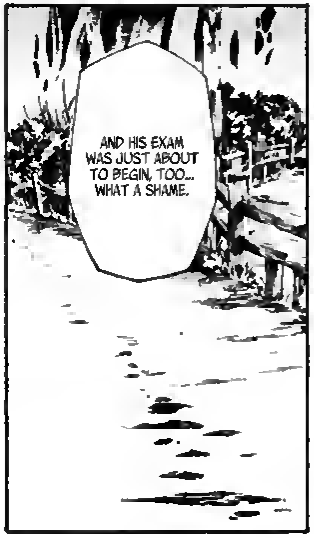

THE MOST REPULSIVE THING ABOUT THE ZEROZAKI ISN'T THEIR MURDEROUS NATURE.
IT'S THEIR HABIT OF UNCONSCIOUSLY RESONATING WITH EACH OTHER.
AND THIS SAME PRINCIPLE ALSO ALLOWS THE PUPPETS TO TRACK THE ZEROZAKI
THEY CAN EVEN GRASP EACH OTHER'S GENERAL LOCATION.
IT'S TRULY MAD.
THOUGH NOT AS STRONGLY AS YOU ALL, THEY'RE STILL ABLE TO SENSE THAT RESONANCE.
ALTHOUGH ARTIFICIAL, THE EXISTENCE OF PUPPETS IS LIKE THAT OF THE ZEROZAKI, IN THAT THEY HAVE LOST CERTAIN POTENTIALITIES, AND ARE AT A DEAD END IN LIFE.

"RESONANCE"
THAT'S ...
YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME?
THEN DO YOU BELIEVE YOU HAPPENED UPON THAT MAN BY CHANCE?
SO YOU BELIEVED THAT NON-SENSE?
ACCORDING TO MY YOUNGER BROTHER, AT THE TIME,
TH- THAT WAS...
AND WHEN HE APPEARED TO SAVE YOU AT YOUR CONDOMINIUM,
...BECAUSE SOUSHIKI-SAN SAW THE ADDRESS ON MY STUDENT ID
BUT ABOVE ALL ELSE, YOU SHOULD HAVE SENSED SOMETHING YOURSELF
EVEN IF YOU AREN'T BOUND BY BLOOD, IT'S AS IF-
You were not at your written address, but on the roof.
!!

You already have a close relationship... It feeling as if you are real family.
BUT DON'T MIS-UNDERSTAND, LITTLE GIRL.
THAT ISN'T ANY EMOTION OR LOVE OF ANY KIND
IT'S SIMPLY A DISPO-SITION.
THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO THE ZEROZAKI
But that man likely genuinely believes it to be love, and without a doubt, he will come to save you.

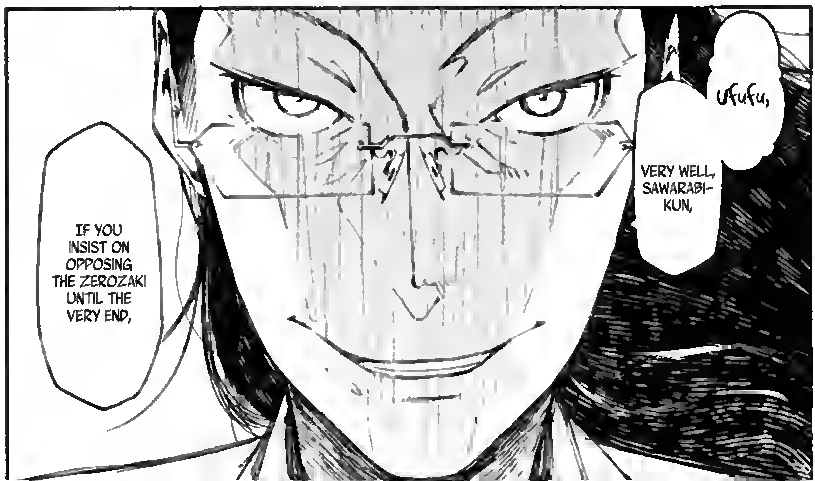
NOT TO MENTION, HE'S A RATHER CONFIDENT GUY.
SO HE'LL PROBABLY COME BY ALONE
AND THAT WILL BE WHEN,
THE "WORST" WILL MEET HIS DEMISE.
MY, MY...

WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT SHE'D ACTUALLY BE KIDNAPPED?
HOW FUNNY.


AND HIS EXAM WAS JUST ABOUT TO BEGIN, TOO... WHAT A SHAME.

I WONDER IF THIS IS KOJIKA-KUN'S BLOOD
LOOKING AT THE AMOUNT OF BLOOD LOST, HE WON'T LAST LONG.

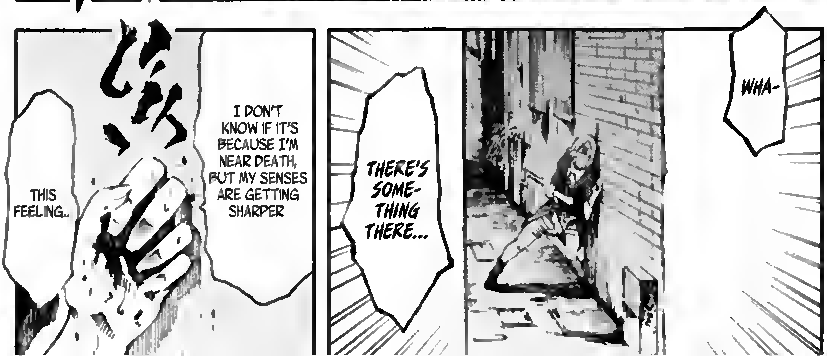
AND THE ONE IN QUESTION, IORI-CHAN...
WELL, I'M SURE SHE'S SAFE FOR THE MOMENT.
IF SHE WAS KIDNAPPED, RATHER THAN MURDERED,
IT WOULD BE POINTLESS IF SHE WEREN'T ALIVE AS A HOSTAGE.
IN THAT SENSE TOO, IT WAS RIGHT TO SEAL HER ARMS
AS LONG AS SHE DOESN'T CARELESSLY RESIST, SHE SHOULD BE ABLE TO AVOID ANY UNNECESSARY INJURIES.
WHAT'S MORE, WHILE SHE'S CAPTURED, I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HER INDISCRIMINATELY KILLING PEOPLE ALL AROUND TOWN THE MOMENT I TAKE MY EYES OFF HER.
IF ALL GOES WELL, BOTH OF MY PROBLEMS MIGHT GET RESOLVED ALL AT ONCE.


Ufufu,
VERY WELL, SAWARABI-KUN,
IF YOU INSIST ON OPPOSING THE ZEROZAKI UNTIL THE VERY END,

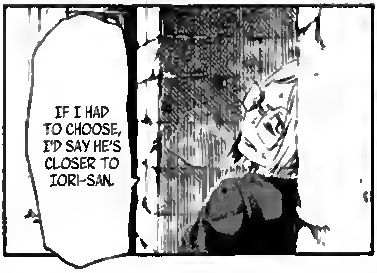
I'LL SETTLE THIS WITH MY BLADES.

TCH...
WHAT KIND OF KIDNAPPER LETS THEIR TARGET GET KIDNAPPED BY SOMEONE ELSE?
AND I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING BEFORE IORI-SAN COMPLETELY TURNS INTO A ZEROZAKI

!?


I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S BECAUSE I'M NEAR DEATH, BUT MY SENSES ARE GETTING SHARPER
THIS FEELING..
THERE'S SOME-THING THERE...
WHA-

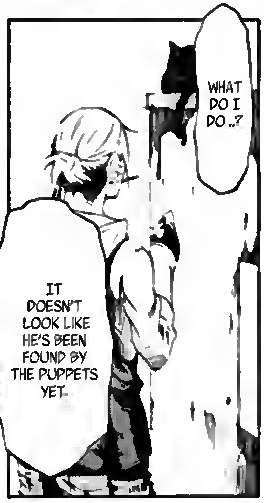
ZEROZAKI!


IF I HAD TO CHOOSE, I'D SAY HE'S CLOSER TO IORI-SAN.

MIND RENDER.
NO.

DON'T TELL ME.

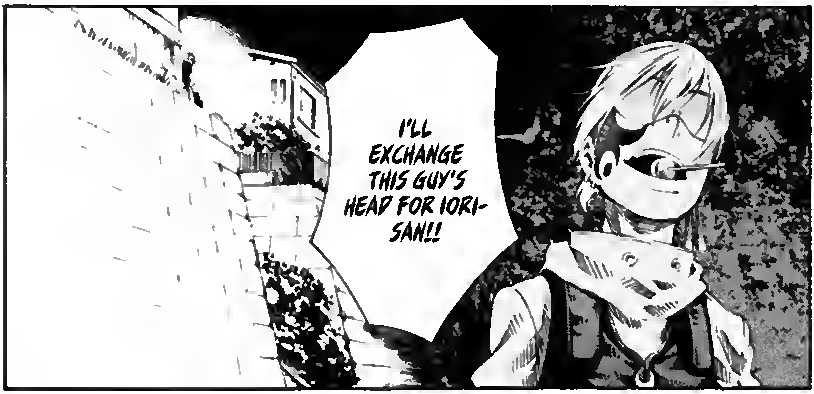
THIS GUY.


WHAT DO I DO..?
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE'S BEEN FOUND BY THE PUPPETS YET.

The homicidal monster with the tattooed face!
The Zerozaki, the Sawarabi are searching for!

HAHA...
WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT THIS SORT OF CARD WOULD JUST COME DANCING MY WAY...
LUCK'S ON MY SIDE.

I DON'T KNOW WHY HE'S IN A PLACE LIKE THIS, BUT-
I'M SURE THIS GUY'S WORTH PLENTY MORE THAN IORI-SAN WHO'S ON THE VERGE OF BECOMING A ZEROZAKI!
THAT'S WHY-


I'LL EXCHANGE THIS GUY'S HEAD FOR IORI-SAN!!

OH?

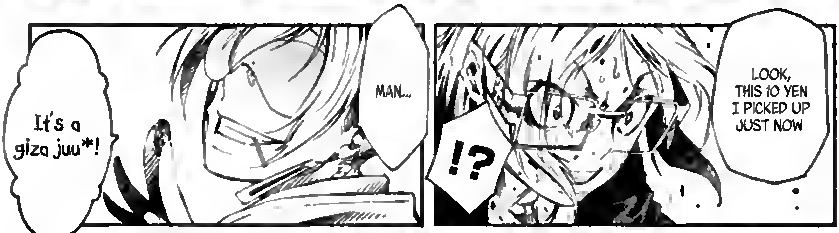
10 YEN?!

Lucky-

Zerozaki.
ALTHOUGH THEY ONLY POSSESS THE DISPOSITION TO SIMPLY "KILL PEOPLE",
EVEN AMONG THE MURDEROUS NAMES, THEIR EXISTENCE IS MOST FEARED, AND MOST AVOIDED.
AND AT THE SAME TIME, THIS GROUP LIKELY HOLDS FAMILY MOST DEAR.
UNLIKE THE MURDEROUS NAMES OR THE CURSED NAMES, I DON'T HAVE A FAMILY, NOR ANY SORT OF TALENT OR DISPOSITION. NOT A SINGLE THING.
EVERYTHING ABOUT US IS DIFFERENT.

HEY, IORI-SAN,
WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO BECOME A ZEROZAKI?
IT DEFINITELY SEEMS LIKE A LIFE DEVOID OF FREEDOM
FOR ME, WHO HAS ALWAYS MADE MY OWN DECISIONS.
THAT'S WHY,
I WANTED TO GIVE YOU,
THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF

THIS SORT OF WILD BEHAVIOR ISN'T COOL, BUT I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME, DO I?
TATTOO-FACED HOMICIDAL MONSTER,
THINK OF THIS AS KARMA AND GIVE YOUR-SELF UP.
THIS IS THE CHOICE THAT I'VE MADE.
This is my answer!!



TL NOTE: LIT. JAGGED 10 TEN YEN COIN MANUFACTURING BETWEEN 1951-1958 WHICH IS TREATED LIKE A COLLECTIBLE

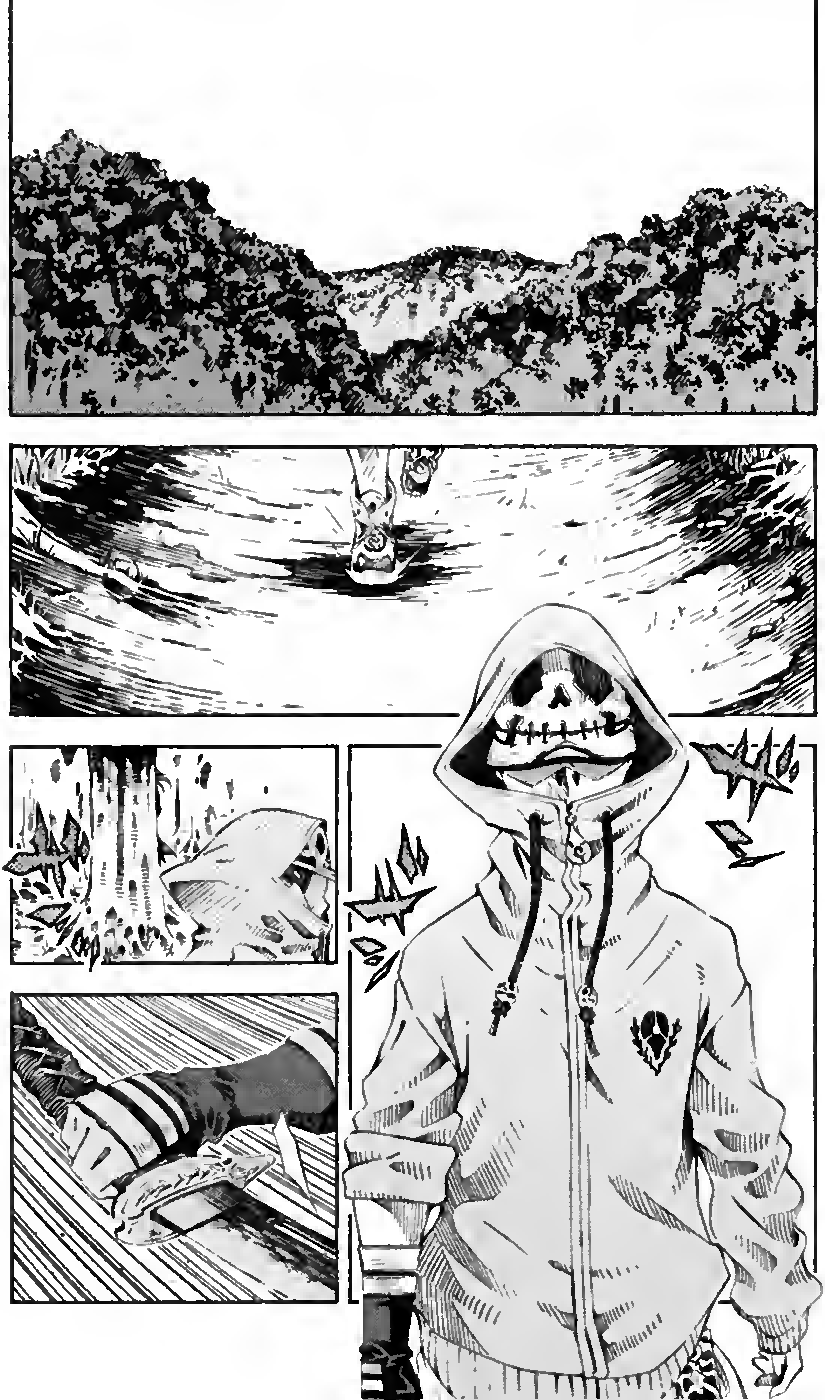
CHE... I KILLED HIM.. IT'S 'CAUSE YOU WERE GIVING OFF SUCH AN ODOR OF BLOOD TOGETHER WITH ALL THAT MURDEROUS INTENT.
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU TARGETED ME KNOWING WHO I AM OR NOT, BUT-
WELL
HOW DO I PUT THIS?

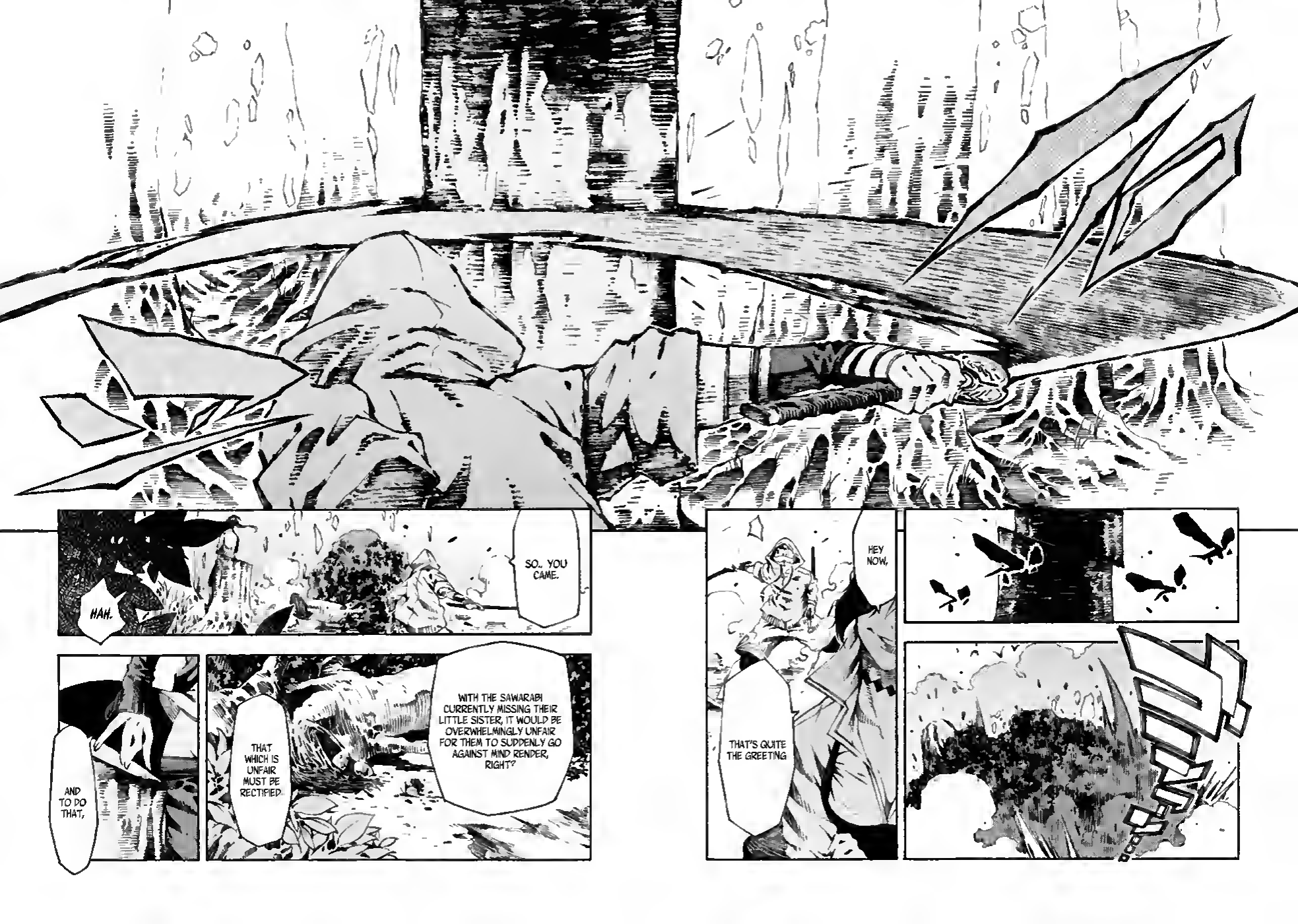
LUCK WAS NOT ON YOUR SIDE.

So ridiculous.
AH,
WAIT- I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF BEING ON THE RUN.
INSTEAD HANGING AROUND LEAVING FOOTPRINTS,
I GOTTA HURRY AND STEAL ANIKI'S* SCISSORS AND RUN FOR IT
*T/N: LITERALLY MEANS BIG BROTHER. CAN BE USED IN FAMILY-LIKE ORGANIZATIONS FOR SOMEONE OF A HIGHER RANK.
MAN,

AHH, I SEE...
SO THIS IS WHAT SAWARABI WAS TALKING ABOUT...
MEETING THEM TO BEGIN WITH IS YOUR UNDOING.
THE ZEROZAKI BRING DEATH TO ALL THOSE INVOLVED WITH THEM.
SO THAT-

Is the concept they call "evil".




SO.. YOU CAME.
HAH.
WITH THE SAWARABI CURRENTLY MISSING THEIR LITTLE SISTER, IT WOULD BE OVERWHELMINGLY UNFAIR FOR THEM TO SUDDENLY GO AGAINST MIND RENDER, RIGHT?
THAT WHICH IS UNFAIR MUST BE RECTIFIED.
AND TO DO THAT,
HEY NOW,
THAT'S QUITE THE GREETING

Undertaking any challenge is my creed.
.....
I'M GRATE-FUL.

AS LONG AS I GET WHAT I CAN GET...
NONE OF IT MATTERS.
COME ON.. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
YOUR REASONS OR SITUATION DON'T MATTER TO ME
.....
THAT'S FINE AS WELL....
INDEED-

THE "STRONGEST" IS LIKELY THE ONLY OPPONENT FOR THE "WORST".

ZEROZAKI SOUSHIKI NO NINGEN SHIKEN VOLUME 2 END

① *Zerozaki Soushiki no Ningen Shiken*

And there you have the 2nd volume of the comic version of "Zerozaki Soushiki no Ningen Shiken". I'm sure readers picked up the signs from the rushed death of Tsuge Jion in the 1st volume, but this volume is where we genuinely start to diverge from the original light novel. When I say "diverge", it kind of gives the feeling of a multi-ending scenario type game. But if you were to ask what the difference was between a light novel and a game, thinking about it from a light novelist's perspective, I would say it's whether or not there is a divergence. If the ability to present everything (and in this case, I mean "everything" the producers can think of) is the strong point of games, then I believe the strong point of light novels is avoiding such a divergence. And so, when a book that was once published is released as paperback, I don't revise developments or rewrite characters. But on the other hand, if I said I didn't think at all about a different future for this tale, that would be a lie, or maybe me just being pretentious. Which is why I very much enjoyed reading this "Ningen Shiken" with a divergent future from the original light novel.

For reference, when I recall the time I wrote "Zerozaki Soushiki VS Sawarabi Naguma" in the light novel, it made me think "Man, Soushiki's cruel." That "he kills you even if you pass the human exam." The moment Soushiki said "die by my hands" and stabbed Naguma with his scissors, I truly thought Naguma was a goner. But he survived. That was the same for both the original light novel and the comic version, but it really made me think his "ability to survive" was amazing and that "wow, characters can be amazing".

Well, when I recall things like that, and after getting to know Sawarabi Naguma, I definitely can't "rewrite" him now. So before even considering a divergence, I think I have to establish the fact that I can't rewrite the same character the second time around. In other words, this "Zerozaki Soushiki no Ningen Shiken" is not a remake, but a comic version with a new story. I look forward to its future developments.

Human Exam

Past Questions 2

Author Nishio Ishin

③ Naginata

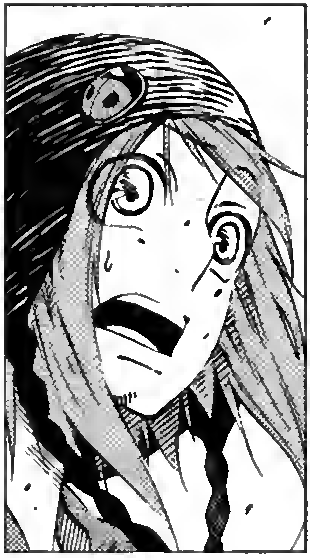
There's this thing called a ginata* reading. I'll give you an etymological example. There's a sentence that reads "Benkei swung the naginata." It's possible for this sentence to end up being read, "You know, Benkei, he swung the ginata." Now this would make you go "what's a 'ginata'?" and get you wondering what this mysterious lethal weapon was. This line from the story of Musashibo Benkei* probably isn't too familiar, so I'll put this quip aside now. But another famous example would be "Please take your clothes off here."* It's not clear whether it's actually referring to your clothes or your shoes. But because it's called "ginata reading" and not "naginata reading" it's a bit tricky.

② Mind Render

Clearly, these scissors can be split during a serious fight. Eh, that kind of makes me feel like he should do that from the beginning, but maybe there's something of Soushiki's aesthetics to that. Speaking of which, I get the feeling that it's officially established somewhere that "Zerozaki Soushiki is stronger when he doesn't use Mind Render." Now, I'm sure some people question why he even uses such a puzzling lethal weapon such as those huge scissor, but I'm pretty sure that reason wasn't written in the original light novel, so that will remain a mystery for now. It's possible that the reason for his use of large scissors as a lethal weapon might be revealed in this comic version (don't hold me to it).

Actually, I wonder if that would lead to the creation of a weapon called a "ginata". Kanji-wise, it would be "frolic" and "knife".Anyway, the naginata. This seems to be the strongest weapon for him to wield. They say it has 3 times the reach of a sword, but I wonder how many times it really is. But it's strength really is the fact that you can strike the legs.

*T/N: GINATA READING IS BASICALLY WHEN YOU PUT A BREAK IN THE SENTENCE AT THE WRONG PLACE CAUSING THE MEANING TO CHANGE JAPANESE DOESN'T USE SPACES IN TEXT, SO YOU JUST HAVE TO KNOW WHERE A WORD ENDS AND BEGINS BUT IF THE SENTENCE IS MOSTLY COMPOSED OF HIRAGANA IT CAN BE AMBIGUOUS AT TIMES WHICH IS ONE REASON WHY KANJI IS IMPORTANT MUSASHIBO BENKEI WAS A 12TH CENTURY WARRIOR MONK

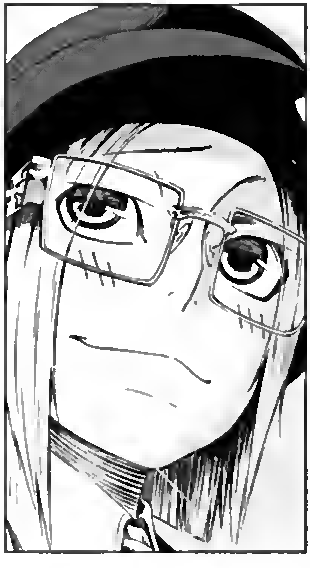


④ Beanie

Mutoh Iori-san wears one. It's established that she doesn't take it off, even in summer. The reason is unknown, but maybe later in the comic version (shortened).
But wait, she had it off in the 5th chapter of this volume.
When she was in the bathtub, that's right!

Fashion-wise, I was happy when she wore street clothes in chapter 5. In the light novel, she was captured while in her school uniform, so there wasn't a chance to see her in street clothes.

A change of outfits, including the hat. It makes me think that one of manga's strengths really is the fact that you get to see characters in different visual aspects.



⑤ Hanamaki Kojika

Kidnapper.

An original character for the comic version of "Zerozaki Soushiki no Ningen Shiken". I was surprised that he met a crueller end than I was thinking. I thought "this development would be impossible for the original light novel!", but after thinking about it for a while, it was pretty much the same for the characters in the original work, too.
The fact that his weapon is a kendama perfectly matched his world view.
Now, I'm starting to think it's odd that Kojika-san never made an appearance in the original light novel.

⑥ Murdering Name

There was a certain amount of explanation in this volume, so I won't be adding to it, but I'll write as much as I can remember about this term itself. First of all, this term did not first appear in "Zerozaki Soushiki no Ningen Shiken". I believe the first time was in the Zaregoto Series. The term "murdering name" appeared while I was describing Zerozaki Hitoshiki in the light novel where he first made an appearance, "Kubishime Romanchisuto: Ningen Shikkaku, Zerozaki Hitoshiki". Something like "I'm sure no one would call themselves a "murdering name" for fun."

It was over 10 years ago, so it's impossible to remember clearly. But when I think about "Ningen Shiken" as a whole, and this naming in particular, I don't think I could think all this up as I am right now. As a novelist, I'd like to think I've improved in these 10 years, but on the other hand, as a novelist, I guess I have to admit there are intuitions I've lost during these 10 years, too. So actually, I believe that when reading a comic version or working on a paperback version and looking back on my old work, it's important to learn from my past self.

⑦ Cursing Name

Something to pair with the Murdering Name.
This is a first in the "Ningen Series".
Originally, as a novelist, I used to obsess over character names, but what made me first give characters to the names themselves, I think is when I was coming up with the "family names" of the "7 Murdering Names" and "6 Cursing Names".
From all the names I thought up during my 10 years as a novelist, when I thought about which of those might be to the best, and my choices probably were affected by how excited I was at that time, I believe "Zerozaki Soushiki" is one of the stronger names. As for characters in "Ningen Shiken", I like names like "Sawarabi Hawatari" and "Tokinomiya Tokei" because they give off a vibe of what the characters are like and they're not ordinary. I'd like to try and continue to name characters this way.
As reference, from my excitement while writing the "Past Questions", there were three names I thought of, that as the novelist Nishio Ishin, made me think "man, that was pretty good". These are from outside of "Ningen Shiken".

1. Sorakara Kuu (Himei Den)
2. Numachi Rouka (Hanamonogatari)
3. Kushinaka Choushi (Bukimi de Soboku na Kakowareta Sekai)

I'd like to create a character name dictionary some day. Even for a long while after appearing in the original light novel and in "Ningen Shiken", this "Cursing Name" was one category completely shrouded in mystery. But auspiciously, they appeared in one of the final tetralogies, "Zerozaki Hitoshiki no Ningen Kankei: Zerozaki Soushiki to no Kankei".Again, I think it's an interesting coincidence that it was in "Zerozaki Soushiki to no Kankei", but I guess might be pretty obvious.

⑧ So Ridiculous

Zerozaki Hitoshiki's favorite phrase.
This phrase was given birth to pair with the narrator's favorite phrase of "I'm just kidding, though" in the Zaregoto Series. Somehow, this "pairing", whether good or bad, I think is something of my writing style. I just love pairs with complete opposite personalities. But I think the basis for that was growing up reading shonen manga, plus something to do with the mystery novel Tantei to Joshu. If I express something or emphasize something, I want to express or emphasize the opposite right after. I'm sure this is why I wanted to write the "Ningen Series" after writing the "Zaregoto Series". Even though I'm talking about myself, this is an objective conjecture.If I say it the other way around (I say things like this), once I get one concept, it's the same as thinking of both sides for me. But if I wrote just one, I feel I'd be asked whether I have a policy or not. But it's my policy not to be a person that answers that not having a policy is my policy.

⑨ Zerozaki Hitoshiki

And so, he made his appearance. The young Zerozaki. He really does look scary, visually. Now, the fun part is waiting to see his role. No wait. His role is the fun part. So, look forward to volume 3.
And Sawarabi Yumiya, who never made an explicit appearance in the original light novel, will be making a visual appearance, too.

※収録されている内容は、作品の執筆年代・執筆された状況を考慮し、
コミックス発売当時のまま掲載しています。

零崎双識の人間試験(2)

2014年8月1日発行(01)

著 者　西尾維新・シオミヤイルカ
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発行者　清水保雅

発行所　株式会社 講談社
〒112-8001
東京都文京区音羽 2-12-21

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